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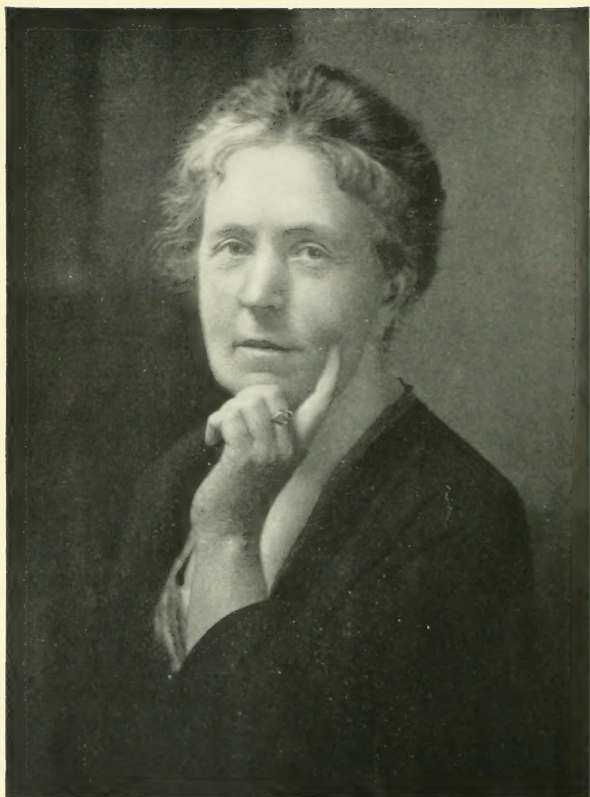
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IN THE HOUSE OF MY PILGRIMAGE



Camera portrait by E. O. Hoppé

LILIAN M. FAITHFULL. 1924.

IN THE HOUSE OF MY PILGRIMAGE

BY

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LONDON : FORMERLY PRINCIPAL OF

THE LADIES' COLLEGE

CHELTENHAM

LONDON

CHATTO & WINDUS

1925

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14
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

First published November 11th. 1924

Second Impression January 1925

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TO MY MOTHER, WHOSE FORESIGHT MADE MY
PROFESSIONAL LIFE POSSIBLE,
AND TO MY FRIENDS, YOUNG AND OLD, WHO
HAVE MADE IT HAPPY.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

‘ Each age is a dream that is dying
Or one that is coming to birth.’

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THOSE of us who were born between 1860 and 1870 may indeed consider ourselves fortunate, for we have surely lived through the most interesting and eventful period for women in our national history, and perhaps in the history of the world. It has been a time of extraordinarily rapid change in the status of women, in their education, their social life, their work and their amusements. Still more remarkable has been the rapidity of change and development in the world around us. The half-century from 1870 to 1920 has been one of unexampled scientific progress and discovery, in which, of late years, women have taken a small but not inconsiderable share ; and science has affected politics, economics and religion. There has been a broadening of religious thought and a far more general interest than heretofore in philosophical speculation and psychology.

The latter part of Queen Victoria's reign was marked by abounding activity in every department of life and thought, and an amazing output of nervous energy and original work. It was an age of pioneers, of invention, of experiment and of adventure. Is it only a natural tendency to exalt the past, to which we must all plead guilty as life advances, which makes one believe that both in Church and State, in Art and Science, the latter part of the nineteenth century produced giants ? We recall Lightfoot

and Westcott among divines, Gladstone and Disraeli among politicians, Huxley and Darwin, Pasteur and Lister among the scientists. A period is surely remarkable which opens with the Pre-Raphaelites, goes on with Whistler and ends with Augustus John, and which embraces the work of Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, George Meredith, Stevenson and Bernard Shaw.

We have seen the rise and fall of the materialistic philosophy, the contest between science and religion, and signs of their future reconciliation. We have witnessed the effort made by William Morris and his followers to restore the dignity of handicraft, and the growth of an interest in art and crafts. We have studied theories of education from Matthew Arnold and Herbert Spencer to Madame Montessori and the Dalton system, and schemes of social reform from Carlyle and Ruskin to the Sidney Webbs.

The period from 1870 to 1910 has been variously described. Sometimes it is spoken of as 'The armed Peace'—in which there was great industrial prosperity, a rise in the standard of comfort, a greater interdependence in trade, and a desire to think internationally. Or again, it has been justly called 'The advent of the new communications'—in which the steam engine, telegraphs, telephones, aeroplanes, and wireless appeared in quick succession. Let me quote a passage from A. R. Wallace's *The Wonderful Century*: 'In the facilities and possibilities of communication with our fellow-men all over the world, the advance made in the century 1800 to 1900 is not only immensely greater than that effected during the whole preceding period of human history, but it has led to the most marvellous results far beyond even the imagination of the most advanced men of science in preceding centuries.'

It is almost incredible that only about sixty years ago a member of Parliament, speaking in opposition to the introduction of railways, should have asserted that 'such schemes were dangerous, delusive, unsatisfactory, and above all unknown to the constitution of the country'; and that he hated the name of a railway as he hated the devil.

Rapidity of transport has revolutionised life for all of us, and the isolation of houses and villages has been removed at the cost of repose. It is difficult to realise that in 1870 there were no bicycles, motor-cars, telephones nor electric light. In the 'seventies women no longer spent their days in a stillroom making preserves and pickles, but, on the other hand, they were not whirled about in motor-cars and tubes, and there were not sudden calls at any hour of the day from friends passing on a motor tour. The radius for those without carriages could only be about four miles, and for those who were not naturally neighbourly or interested in village affairs the meetings with acquaintances were as rare as they are now perpetual. Carlyle and Ruskin were the prophets of 1870, striving to rouse an inert England to a joy in work, to strenuousness and the employment of the full powers of mind and body. To-day we need the gospel of quiet and meditation, and the renewed response of the spirit to the appeal of the mystics is significant of the tension of life.

Corporate life has doubtless gained much by the annihilation of distances between town and town. We live a far more social and far less domestic life than formerly. The affairs not merely of towns and villages, but of counties and large districts are managed by councils. Clubs, societies and associations of every kind have sprung up like mushrooms. Philanthropy and education

have been taken out of the hands of the individual and entrusted to committees.

The Victorian days of peace abroad and respectability at home, of heavy furniture and heavy meals, of unexciting pleasures but constant occupation, fostered in some, no doubt, a dullness that reduced country society to utter boredom, but also tended to the conservation of energy, and to the production of a generation amazingly strong in body and healthy in mind. In truth, we find in the latter years of the nineteenth century the same outburst of discovery, invention, literary activity and educational advance as in the sixteenth century, when the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth produced Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser and Bacon, and many other poets, explorers, dramatists and scientists. I would suggest that this expenditure of vitality was made possible and even inevitable by long storage of energy during those years of tranquil comfort, of peace and plenty, of ordered respectability and domesticity which followed the Crimean War. Both minds and bodies were free from the strain of later days when the pace of life increased so rapidly.

Such conversion of stored-up potential energy into explosive action took place in every direction during the second half of the nineteenth century. Certainly the quantity of the output of original work in the Victorian era is even more surprising than its high quality. The rush of new ideas, new inventions, new developments, is even more striking than the nature of these discoveries, epoch-making as they were. Had the flow been in one direction only, it might be attributed to special conditions favourable to an advance in that quarter, but such a general and simultaneous 'release of energy' could surely only be due to an accumulated store of nervous power

within the nation at large, which had hitherto failed to find sufficient expression.

Those born in the latter part of the nineteenth century were indeed well equipped by the inheritance of health and strength to become pioneers in every direction. The children of the present day, many of whom seem to have been born tired, certainly will not have the same reason to be grateful to their parents and grandparents as we have. The speed of life has increased at a furious pace, and the mothers of the last twenty years have lived in what has been well described as 'whirligigs of excitement.'

The emancipation of women occurred at a time when every institution, every convention, every tradition, was being subjected to criticism; when they could take part in the flow of new life and thought and constructive energy. In one respect the Elizabethan age offers no parallel to the Victorian. There was no woman's movement. Here and there a scholar appeared like Lady Jane Grey, but she remained isolated and hardly noticed; or a woman of charm and character like Margaret Roper; but it was reserved for the nineteenth century to recognise women as a force, as comrades and fellow-workers with men, as students and women of affairs, as administrators and professional colleagues. And the first step towards this recognition was the provision of a suitable and sound education, which women demanded, organised and obtained. True, they could hardly have achieved their purpose without the sympathy and generous help of men, but the new departure was in the main the conception and achievement of women.

In a book on education published in 1907¹ the writer says: 'Why did this movement begin about 1850?

¹ S. Burstall, *English High Schools for Girls*.

Why did the nineteenth century see this wide diffusion of new ideals for women and the successful struggle against the limitations of the past? To these questions we can give no satisfactory answer.' Obviously the greater diffusion of knowledge, the general interest in invention and scientific discoveries reached the women of England in their homes, fired their imagination and roused in them a longing for learning. Social and political questions became familiar to them through the medium of the daily newspaper, and awakened in them a desire for a wider field of work than could be found in the home; but it appears also that the energy which distinguished the age belonged as much to women as to men, and was forced to find new ways of manifesting itself. Like men, women wanted new worlds to explore, and the old and well-worn tracks would no longer satisfy them. They wanted a larger field for their exploits; they longed for a great adventure. Just as there are men who can only be happy if they are facing the supreme difficulties and strain of an Antaretic or Mount Everest expedition, and men like Cecil Rhodes, for whom no schemes are too colossal, so the pioneers of the women's movement ignored opposition, met difficulties with a high-hearted courage, and lived Spartan lives of incessant work and self-sacrifice. So ready were they, indeed, to 'scorn delights and live laborious days' that they hardly knew if they were sitting on a box or an easy-chair, or eating caviare or a kipper. Miss Emily Davies, Miss Clough, Miss Buss, Miss Beale, and Mrs. Garrett Anderson were splendidly strong and healthy as well as vigorous in mind, and they lived to old age with mental powers unimpaired and interests unabated.

To these outstanding leaders succeeding generations owe a great debt of gratitude. They paved the way for us.

But I believe our gratitude should also be extended to the women of an earlier generation still—the parents of those who inaugurated the revolution—whose names are unknown as pioneers, but who were content to devote themselves in those early Victorian days to quiet domestic life, bearing children, rearing them, educating them, and preparing them for that wider life which few of the parents might enjoy, though it was given them to foresee it in some measure. Their lives may seem to us to have been very dull, but they saved ours from dullness. They gave infinite time and thought to bringing up children, and especially to their moral and religious training, and although they knew little or nothing of science and hygiene, they were not for the most part unsuccessful in producing healthy families. The children started well as babies; they were not the victims of nervous diseases as are so many children nowadays, and the parents were not so busy that they handed over the training of their children to others. They very certainly did their part in producing the revolution in women's lives which was inevitable when girls tingling with health and strength found a world around them alight with ideas and ideals to be captured and translated into action.

The change that occurred in the attitude of women towards life was more significant than any change in their circumstances. They took a new view of their duties, their capacities and their function in the State. There was a change of conviction, and it is by conviction that we live.

I do not think that there had been so much subjection of women in bygone ages as is commonly supposed; the limitations on their activities were often self-imposed, and the rôle allotted to them accepted with goodwill. Few had ambitions for any other life, and they were not—like

chimney-sweeps or maids-of-all-work—too miserable and too weak to cast off their shackles. Perhaps contentment was due to their lack of vision. There is certainly no reason to pity the women of the early nineteenth century, and they did not pity themselves. The heroines in the novels of Jane Austen, George Eliot or Mrs. Gaskell were not unhappy. Though unenterprising in the manner of our times, they yet had adventures of their own. In *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* there is a foretaste of the struggle to come, for the Brontës were rebels by nature. George Eliot stands at the parting of the ways. In *Hetty* and in *Eppie* she has described the women of the past, and in *Maggie Tulliver*, *Dorothea* and *Romola* the women of the future—born leaders in mind and spirit, yet neither militant nor aggressive; with a power of endurance at least as great as their power of action, and a tenderness matched to their strength. Such women were ideal exponents of the new faith. By no violence but by natural force of character and consistency of purpose they won their way.

Natural causes, I hold, produced such women in the Victorian age, and these women brought about a transformation in conditions of life, education and outlook. They led the march, orderly or disorderly; and obtained recognition from the State, the possession of legal rights and privileges hitherto unimagined.

We hear lamentations over the slow progress made, the many obstacles to overcome, but I doubt if any social change so far-reaching in its effects has been so rapidly achieved. When future generations read the history of the women's movement, they will be astounded at the transformation effected and the progress made in thirty years.

In the following chapters I cannot pretend to a knowledge of social, political and educational movements that

would entitle me to form conclusions or advance theories. I can only hazard a conjecture and here and there make a suggestion. I give the result of personal observations and reflections on the happenings of a working life—some record of its humours, its problems, its joys and its anxieties. The pressure of professional life leaves little time for ordered meditation. There are constant calls for action, for rapid decisions, for interviews and information. There is barely time for due consideration of the success or failure of the ventures made, and yet it is essential that one should often stand away from one's work and view it. It is amazingly difficult to see the life one is living in perspective.

And for those of us who began our working life in the 'eighties, and belonged to almost the first generation of professional women, there was the added difficulty of having no precedents, and of being obliged to do much that was experimental. We had to devise our own machinery, to determine our policy, and to inspire others with confidence when we had little ourselves. We were all breaking new ground, and, although on the whole kindly help was more abundant than unkindly criticism, we were aware that women were on their trial as administrators, and we often had to plough a lonely furrow.



CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD

‘How shall I return, and how
Look once more on those old places?
For Time’s cloud is on me now
That each day, each hour, effaces
Visions once on every bough.’

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD

LET me now take you back to the 'seventies and describe the Hertfordshire home of a professional man. We may expect a large family; they abounded, being mercifully the rule and not the exception as now. But the children, however numerous, were hardly as much in evidence as the children of to-day. Home life was carefully organised, and I doubt if we have advanced in abandoning some of the institutions of those days.

Nursery life had its very definite delights, and children have missed much who have not had the perfect playmate and kindly autocrat often found in a nurse who brought up her charges by the light of common sense, and with a feeling of proprietorship only comparable to that of the old-fashioned gardener. How many of us have shared Stevenson's devotion, and echoed his lines to his old nurse :

' My second mother, my first wife,
The angel of my infant life ' ?

I seem to see our nursery arranged for a wedding, and my sailor brother publishing the banns of marriage between our Nurse and any butcher, baker or painter who might have impressed himself on his youthful imagination, while Nurse sat unmoved over her sewing. How readily children's thoughts, and therefore their games, are con-

cerned with the great events of life, birth, marriage, death.

There was a never-failing fascination in the stories and songs of Nurse's youth—very quaint folk stories, and songs with action. Where did they come from? 'A pie sat on a pear tree,' and 'The Sheepstealer, John Scott.' Their memory is for us bound up with an aroma of hot buttered toast, and they belonged to gala days.

At bedtime, Nurse would make her rounds, tucking up each sleepy child, and 'Good night, Nursie; I hope you will have a good night with baby' would be heard from every bed. There was such a succession of babies, and what better wish could there be to secure Nurse's peace and comfort?

I am astonished that parents nowadays seem to pay comparatively little attention to the choice of a nurse, and the more so as many mothers see far less of their small children than in the past. I would choose a nurse young enough in body and spirit to play with children, and enjoy on her own part a paper-chase or hide-and-seek. I would choose a woman of happy temperament and strong sense of humour, laughing and singing, for such a nature is infectious. I would have one with a sweet voice and a soothing hand, to comfort the baby aches and pains. But she must also be a disciplinarian, and have the power of righteous wrath.

There was one occasion on which we were having nursery theatricals and wanted to turn a younger sister into a black boy. After discussion, we decided that Kent's brown knife powder would produce a good effect, and rubbed it in with more zeal than kindness in spite of repeated protests from the victim. We were enjoying the success of our work when Nurse appeared on the scene and let loose the



L. M. I.

A FAMILY GROUP. 1871.



vials of her fury. We had ruined the complexion of the child and it would not recover, and it was possible that we had poisoned her. Certainly it seemed as though 'not all the water in the rough rude sea' could wash away the fine gritty powder from that face, and our sins were cast up at us for many a long day.

The life of the nursery was quite apart from that of the drawing-room, and a regular routine belonged to both. My mother's activity knew no bounds. There were eight of us to bring up on an income of about £1000. She made our clothes, taught us, kept elaborate accounts, wrote a diary, contributed articles on the ethics of daily life to magazines, and began to write a History of England. She also read widely and thoroughly, making careful annotations, and no day was considered satisfactory without its quota of what was known as solid reading. Carpenter's *Mental Physiology* and Buckle's *History of Civilisation* remain in my memory among the books with which she grappled. Nowadays women have much intellectual companionship, endless opportunities for discussion, and much stimulus to mental life. She had none. The result was an independence of thought and individuality in outlook which were very unusual.

The formalities which had marked the relations between our grandparents and their children did not exist for us, but we should not have dreamed of invading the rooms of our parents at other than appointed times. We appeared in the dining-room for a short time after breakfast, but only at six o'clock did our parents really belong to us for an hour and devote themselves to the 'little ones.' The ceremony of getting ready to go downstairs was no trivial matter of getting rid of sticky fingers or tangled hair. Its value lay in the fact that it instilled a certain awe and

reverence into children, and best manners were put on with best frocks both on Sundays and in the evenings.

There was no repression when we had really arrived downstairs. Encouragement was given to self-expression which would have delighted the advocates of the Dalton system, and our training in conversation started at a very early age. 'What do you think about this?' my mother would ask of a shy child listening to the talk of the grown-ups at late dinner, while her book remained unread before her, and, if no answer was forthcoming, the child was advised to read her story-book. In later years no mercy was shown to the elder girl who would not play her part in the social game. It was not fair, my mother urged, to take everything and give nothing, and each must do her share in keeping the ball of conversation rolling.

It may be open to question whether the art of conversation can be taught to the young, but at least they can be encouraged to take an intelligent interest in life and letters, and can be induced to ask questions and express views without any danger of making them prigs. Those who would try, however, to cultivate the power of conversation in the young in such a way, must have infinite patience with their shyness and clumsiness, and must be so provocative as to make them forget themselves in the interest of the subject. Such, if I analyse it, was my mother's method.

There is probably nothing which, in a small way, creates more misery than shyness, and I believe that the only cure for it is to have a vital interest in all that is going on, for, if one is really keen about subjects discussed, one plunges into the conversation in spite of oneself as it were, losing all self-consciousness. No one is shy who has anything to say or do, provided there is also a certain sense of capacity in saying or doing it. The most horrible

moments in any society for a shy person are those in which he is conscious of being an object of remark, but can play no part.

I hold it to be one of the few disadvantages of boarding-school life for girls that this education in expression cannot be continued. They have not, of course, the same opportunities of hearing and joining in good conversation ; but, in addition to this, fashion or custom reigns supreme among girls as among boys in a large school, and extends not only to the minutest details of dress and to second helpings at meals, but also to subjects of conversation. Many a girl who arrives from home with an interest in politics, farming or art soon learns to repress all expression of her interests and to confine herself to the half-dozen topics of importance to the school generally. Heads of boarding-houses know this difficulty best, for they suffer from it daily at meals, and their efforts to introduce new subjects are little short of heroic.

The world divides itself into at least two classes of talkers. There are the people mainly interested in accumulating and distributing knowledge, and, secondly, those who are full of wonder and speculation. The former delight to collect facts and retail them. They record their experiences in life, and are ready to intervene in any conversation to correct, amplify, determine. They have no doubts, but ready-made opinions on all subjects. There is an element of finality about their remarks. Nothing is tentative, flexible, elusive, and perpetually beckoning one on. Imagination never runs riot gloriously, nor does humour play its innumerable pranks. Talk of this kind may inspire awe and reverence, and be immensely impressive, but it lacks charm, and such people stifle conversation. The true conversationalist is constantly making

voyages of discovery into the minds of others, suggesting rather than explaining, sometimes full of audacity and making astounding assertions for the sake of arousing a contest. His talk is full of surprises, sometimes leading, sometimes following others into byways, but always encouraging his companions to take their share. It is a fascinating game, and it is played best, as are all corporate games, by the most sympathetic and unselfish. The good talker is not a bitter partisan, or one who is proselytising or trying to gain a following, but one who is honestly anxious to get each member of the group to give of his or her best and to enjoy the giving.

I have been led into a somewhat long digression out of gratitude for help in early days, which has contributed in no small degree to the pleasure of social intercourse all through my life.

Few incidents occurred in a country village to disturb the even tenour of our days : regular walks, regular rests, simple meals and occasional picnics and tea-parties at the houses of friends. Perhaps because there was little money to spare for toys or mechanical devices, more trouble was taken on the part of grown-ups to plan little surprises and think out amusements for us, and certainly there was no lack of invention on our part. Long before telephones had been perfected we had put up a system of communication between our cedar tree and the summer-house. Children's pleasures chosen by themselves are strange enough. One has to confess with shame that they are largely connected with food. Our treats were meringues and maids-of-honour eaten on the kitchen stairs after dinner-parties, a Twelfth-cake and baskets of fruit from the City Company with which my father was connected, and, best of all, hot potatoes in their skins with lots of

butter, which were the supper sequel to wild games of hide-and-seek in the dark all over the house, permitted only when our parents went out to dinner.

There was an unholy excitement about these games, because in one part of the large basement there was a pump-room in which were stored sundry mysterious trunks, which had been packed for forty-five years. They contained my grandmother's possessions. She had died suddenly when quite young, and her things had been hastily packed away by my grandfather's orders, that he might not be harrowed by the sight of them ; nor would he have them touched during his long life. We fled past the spot where they were piled with a creepy feeling that our dead grandmother was somehow there with her clothes, and might jump out on us for daring to invade her solitude.

I do not think that we were exceptionally greedy children, but the rule which ordained that we must eat milk pudding every day before we might have the tarts or fruit that remained over from the evening's late dinner was calculated to make us so. We were told that if we were hungry we could eat what was wholesome, and might then have what was pleasant ; and if we were not hungry we did not need the tarts. How we hated rice and semolina, sago and tapioca, and all odious cereals ; and how persistently we waded through their mushy depths in order to arrive at the solid land of mince pies and stone cream. Solemnly we vowed that when schoolroom rules were over we would never look upon a milk pudding in our own houses. There was one abomination known as Hasty Dick, which was so impossible that not even a meringue could have tempted me to face it. To this day, any suggestion of Benger's Food, or of any soft slimy milk mixture dear to

doctors and nurses, is firmly rejected. I will have none of them, though I take all medicine without a murmur.

Children should have plenty of sweet things and variety of food, for when they cannot be prevented from spending their few pennies persistently on sweets and gloating over their consumption in a corner alone, or in bed, that no one may have to share them, it is because they are hungry for them, and they despise themselves as much as we elders can despise them. The very poor realise this craving, and know that, when they have no food to give their children, a penny to spend at the sweetshop will still the pangs of hunger or unhappiness. A teacher of hygiene told me once that when exhausted after a lecture she would eat as many as ten lumps of sugar and feel revived.

Household arts were not recognised as a branch of education in our young days, but our ambition, like that of most children, to be present at a party was entirely satisfied by permission to wait at table. We were only allowed to do this if we regarded it not as a game but as an art, to be brought to as high a stage of perfection as that of the professional. We were dressed in caps and aprons, and with immense seriousness we played our part and learnt our business. The weekly cleaning of our summer-house was no casual matter either. It necessitated learning scrubbing, washing, ironing, and cleaning of knives, windows and steps under the supervision of an elder sister who allowed no scamping in the smallest detail.

Politics were discussed a good deal at home. Lord Salisbury and Disraeli were the Popes of our household, and Gladstone was regarded as a most dangerous man.

There was almost a feudal tenure in our village—a Squire who ruled unquestioned, and the Squire's wife, the Lady Bountiful of the parish. The poor were visited by

district visitors and clergy, and it would have been hard for any case of illness or distress to escape their vigilant eyes, or for the unworthy to have been mistaken for the worthy, so complete was their knowledge. No doubt there was a certain amount of patronage on the one side and servility on the other, but, in general, it was a happy, friendly relationship, and the pride of the poor in the doings and goings and comings of the folk at the big house was immense. They possessed the Squire and his family as much as the Squire possessed them, though in a different fashion.

Of direct moral instruction there was perhaps less in our home than in many houses, but a living interest was awakened in questions of right and wrong, and we were taught to think things out for ourselves. We were an extraordinarily happy family of very diverse characters, and I can imagine that we might at times have been very unpleasant to each other but for my mother's firmness in stopping all wrangling. A good fight or quarrel clears the air and does no harm, she would say, but perpetual family bickering and fault-finding are disastrous to friendship and very soon become a habit with children; while, if they get control of temper in early years, it remains, and they learn to treat brother and sister with the common courtesy we all show to acquaintances. She used to quote the lines :

‘ We have careful thought for the stranger
And smile for the some-time guest,
But we vex our own with look and tone
Though we love our own the best.’

I do not remember punishments as such, but I do well remember the misery consequent on my mother's discovery of untruthfulness or anything else petty and mean. She

never spoke until she was quite sure of her case. She would watch us playing together and perhaps see one domineering over the others. When it had happened so often as to prove a habit, she would catch the offender and talk quietly to her. 'You must try to break yourself of this, or you will suffer. The other children are beginning to be afraid of you, and soon they will want to play without you. You, who ought to be the one to whom the others look up, will be avoided and disliked. Your place as elder sister will be gone, not through their fault but yours.' To one who had indulged in a fit of temper, sulking for three days with that enjoyment which only the sulky understand, she merely said, 'Is it not strange? I never knew before that you had a temper.' And the girl went out, like St. Peter, and wept bitterly. I can hear her now turn and rend the child who had lied to her. 'Go away. I do not want you near me; you have deceived me.' And, until the lesson had done its work, the child realised with horror that she was veritably unclean. Whether these methods would pass the moral critics of to-day is doubtful, but the efficacy of them is beyond question. Their power depended upon justice in operation, and on the very sparing use of such weapons of reform.

As we grew older, the teacher and disciplinarian turned naturally and easily into the comrade, discussing plans and politics, conduct and character with us all. In later life I have often noticed that the difficulties which arise between mother and daughter, so disastrous to home life when school is over, are due to the fact that this necessary readjustment of relationship has not taken place. The mother forgets that if she does not make a friend of her daughter some one else will do so, and become the confidante and counsellor at the most crucial point of her girl's development.

Our instruction in religion, like our ethical instruction, was not very systematic. We certainly learnt little theology, but as tiny children the Old Testament stories became familiar to us, and as we grew older private prayers and Bible reading were taken as a matter of course. There was comparatively little direction, or careful and critical study of the Bible, doctrine or dogma, but we were encouraged to discuss any matters of difficulty. It was the age of the birth of higher criticism, and our mother would talk to us about books like *Ecce Homo*, and help us to grasp its main ideas and the way in which the thought of the day was moving. She never talked down to us, as so many people think it necessary to do with children, but rather brought us up to her level, discussing things with us quite naturally and assuming that we should be able to understand. As a result, although one remembered little in the way of detail, one gained a general survey of the intellectual life and thought of the times, very valuable, I think, for a child. Her great aim was that we should be alive to the whole quickening of thought going on around us, so that when I went to Oxford in later days I had only to develop an attitude of mind which had been encouraged all through childhood.

Our part of Hertfordshire was a centre in those days of the evangelical school, and, although of late it has been usual to decry the influence of rigid Puritanism on children, I do not think that it was a bad atmosphere in which to bring up young people. It is only in the last year or two that greater justice has been done to the Evangelical Party. For long they were represented only as preaching the gospel of fear and terror, thundering warnings from the pulpit and putting before people so gruesome a vision of hell that they were positively seared into obeying the

Ten Commandments. But, if there was much sternness and austerity in the face of wrong-doing, there was also continual insistence on the possibility and reality of personal communion with the Divine so close and constant as to form an intimacy hardly conceivable in these days. It had nothing of the robust familiarity to which we have become accustomed in the books written since the war, and in the sermons and speeches of those who have tried to bring God home to the people. The relationship was one of tender devotion and whole-hearted trust. In some people there may have been too ostentatious a piety and a certain sanctimoniousness, but with others it was as much a matter of course to refer every detail of the daily life to the judgment of Jesus as it was to Brother Lawrence to practise the Presence of God, and this complete subordination of all wishes to the Will of God did not in the least produce a characterless or negative individual, but rather a decision of character, a gaiety and whole-hearted contentment unusual nowadays and very beautiful. There were many saints among the Evangelicals, and life was not grim with renunciation, but very sunny. If they talked overmuch about their religion, it was because it was uppermost in their minds and as entirely natural to speak about as it is for any of us to talk of matters of supreme interest.

Dr. Rashdall has admirably vindicated Protestantism. 'It abolished,' he says, 'the hard and fast distinction between the religious and the secular life; and discouraged all monastic withdrawal from the world. It peremptorily refused to recognise any moral superiority in the celibate life. It has always acknowledged the possibility of living the most religious life in the most secular callings.'¹

It was the religion of a great friendship, and may be

¹ *Conscience and Christ.*

explained by the fact that it was not the God of the Old Testament who had captured the hearts of these people, but Jesus—living, working, dying. It was not the Divine Lord revealed to St. Paul upon Damascus road who converted so many Evangelicals in the 'sixties and 'seventies, but rather the Master whom St. Peter loved, followed and denied, whom he realised first as man and then as God. I have in my mind a visiting teacher who, day after day, trudged miles giving lessons in various houses. She was an admirable teacher, but she was more. She was the most radiant example of fervent, vital, tender Christianity; wholly happy with what we should call the dullest of lives. She not only had the sense of the indwelling Presence, but gave it to all around her. When anything delighted her it seemed perfectly natural for her to say, 'Now, how good of the dear Lord; it is all His doing.'

The constant missionary meetings, prayer meetings and Bible classes of the Evangelical school had far less influence on children than such a life as hers. Most prayer meetings were dull, at least to young people; sermons were inordinately long; services were thoroughly unmusical. Then, as now, a great deal of the direct religious instruction was unsatisfactory, with the one exception to which Ruskin alludes: the text of the Bible was most carefully learnt, and the Psalms and portions of the Gospels became a very precious possession. Family prayers were a regular institution and Sunday was a very special day. It stood quite by itself; even the hours of meals were altered and Sunday frocks were indispensable. Most people had a special bookcase of books for Sunday, and only games connected in some remote way with the Bible were allowed. I suppose that all children love hymn-singing, and this had its portion of the day allotted to it.

Sunday meals were slightly different from those on other days, and there was a pleasing expectation of apple tart in the summer and plum pudding in the winter. Parents also tried to see more of their children on this one day in the week, and, as a result, Sunday was to us a day full of privileges, if also of obligations. True, we had to put aside our story-books, but there were many excitements and compensations. In our home there was a quaint custom of keeping the children's christening presents, often bibles and prayer-books of a rather sumptuous kind, in a special chest and giving them to the owners on Sunday to be looked at, handled and compared. There was the book with clasps, another with illuminations, and so on, and, strange as it seems, the occupation never failed in its interest. Possibly at the end of the day we had a not entirely healthy feeling of complacency, but, I am inclined to think, of more enjoyment than belongs to the Sundays nowadays, when the junior members of the household feel that the ordinary routine is broken and nothing is arranged to take its place.

Any picture of my home would be incomplete without a portrait of my father. His influence over us was as great as that of my mother, though he was in character a complete contrast to her. They were so entirely at one on the bringing up of children, that in all our training they worked together. He had been born and brought up in Hertfordshire, my grandfather having been tutor to Lord Salisbury and subsequently for thirty years Rector of Hatfield. He had country tastes, was a lover of sport, an excellent tennis player and a moderately good golfer. He would have loved the life of a country squire, and the daily journey to London, first to the War Office, where he held two private secretaryships, and then to his post as Clerk

of the Merchant Taylors Company, must often have been trying to him. But he had the happy faculty of enjoying many things, a naturally sunny, optimistic temper of mind, a very strong sense of humour, a love of his fellow creatures, rich and poor, which was reciprocated, and a genuine interest in them. My mother had few, but very strong and lasting friendships; my father was every one's friend; and I can remember how trying my mother found it, when we went on our annual holiday in the summer, that my father should meet acquaintances wherever he went, and want her to welcome them, whether dull or interesting. He was neighbourly; she was not. The books she cared for would have bored him unspeakably, but he was proud of her intellectual gifts. 'I did not marry your mother for her looks,' he would say to us with a twinkle; 'she was never beautiful; but for her mental and moral qualities.' He was himself good-looking, and something of a dandy in his youth, always most scrupulous in the details of dress, and wearing old clothes with a certain distinction.

He loved all children far more than did my mother, and had little ways in dealing with them that were very charming, and a genius for finding things that would please them. Two of us were allowed, when tiny, to go to his dressing-room and help with the finishing touches of his toilet. We put the lavender water on his handkerchief, chose the tie for the day from a very large selection, and took the trees out of his boots. It was an annual event when the white top-hat took the place of the black in summer-time, and the dust-coat was produced from its winter quarters. When he was paying a visit we were allowed to help him pack, and a most careful lesson was given us on folding coats and filling up corners.

He took the greatest interest in our games, and would

spend a long time when he returned in the evening on instructing us in tennis, or teaching us whist, and always wanted us to understand the science of the game. We loved his companionship, and he encouraged affection in a way quite impossible to my mother. In the evening, when we heard his latchkey turn in the door, there was a stampede of children from every part of the house to get the first kiss, and it was he who made much of our birthdays and chose the presents for each at Christmas, enjoying the smuggling of brown-paper parcels into the house which aroused our excitement. Whenever any special good fortune came to him it was his first impulse to buy my mother a present; and a sealskin coat commemorated one appointment, a ring another.

He cared about neatness and order in the house, and liked a well-appointed household. This was not easy to secure with a family of eight, but it was done. It was a terrible offence to break things, or to spill anything on the table-cloth at meals, and as we hated to be in disgrace with him, we learnt to be careful. He had very strong and somewhat conventional views about women's dress, and liked nothing that was not neat. A shepherd's plaid, small hat and very good shoes were what he preferred.

As we grew older he trusted us completely, and would discuss with us his plans, and even the money anxieties which were ever with us. He had no faith in higher education, but gave in to my mother's wish to send me to Oxford, and was rather inclined to regard it as a harmless amusement; though in later days, when examination lists arrived, there was no one more full of interest. I think that perhaps he enjoyed the University tennis match in which, though a very moderate player, I represented Somerville, as much as any examination results; and I

can still almost hear him admonishing : ‘ Bend your body, my dear ; bend your body.’

Our lessons from my mother were full of interest and even excitement, for we never knew what experiments might be made on us or by us. Sometimes the accuracy of our arithmetic would be tested by setting us to work on the household accounts, and we soon learnt to have some idea of the prices of foodstuffs, the meaning of averages, and the cost of living per head per week. A novel method of learning dates and grouping historical and literary events and persons was invented for us. A large sheet of cardboard was divided into nine variously coloured squares, each square and colour representing a different century from A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1800. Historical events and names of people were written on slips with the year but not the century added, and shuffled together in a bag. The pupil then took a handful of these slips at random and tried to place them on the coloured square to which they belonged, repeating the process daily until all were correctly placed. The association of each century with a colour was extraordinarily effective, and, even now, it would be impossible for me to think of Queen Elizabeth, Sidney and Spenser dressed in anything but light blue, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew was connected with the same colour. Nor could Edward I., Simon de Montfort or Magna Charta be in anything but brilliant orange, or ever be dissociated. A modification of the same system was employed for teaching us French. A list of idioms was written out and the equivalent English phrases put on small slips, and the child’s business was to fit them together correctly. Both these inventions were subsequently published by Sonnenschein, and there the history of them ended for us, although they are not yet out of print. These methods,

though perhaps only possible for individual and not class teaching, were far more satisfactory than the *memoria technica* which was very popular in our parents' time—the plan of a certain Dr. Grey, published in 1846.

The preceding generation also had the *Child's Guide to Knowledge*, Mrs. Markham's *History*, Mrs. Marcet's *Conversations by Land and Water*, and Magnall's *Questions*. We inherited these lesson-books, but a new era was approaching and we resented what our elders had accepted meekly enough, and scorned the priggish children who were introduced as asking intelligent questions and who appeared genuinely anxious to learn. Sandford and Merton came in the same category, and we would have none of them. They were out of date, yet not old enough to have an historic interest.

I have noticed that the rising generation in every age must have either the literature that belongs to their own day and brings with it a sense of familiarity with conditions and intense reality, or people and events so far removed as to belong to a different order altogether. Young people nowadays will read with avidity current literature, good, bad and indifferent. Their taste is catholic; and detective stories, the romances of Baroness Orczy, the sentimental love stories of Ethel M. Dell and the tales of Kipling or Conrad absorb them in turn, but they have no mind for the books we loved thirty years ago—the novels of Mrs. Gaskell and the long stories of Charlotte M. Yonge. How many of us would have to confess to the luxury of weeping over the death of Guy in *The Heir of Redcliff* and hoping that we might one day find a lover exactly like Lance in *The Daisy Chain*. The boys and girls of Miss Yonge's huge families were indeed ourselves—people of like passions, emotions, hopes and fears, and we were

as intimate with every detail of their lives described in volume after volume as with the lives of our sisters, cousins and aunts. Moreover, the atmosphere of ecclesiasticism which pervaded the books appealed to the girl of fifteen, so often going through a period of religious doubt and difficulty which she regarded with immense seriousness. Later on we rejoiced in Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot and Anthony Trollope. Dickens, Thackeray and Scott were not as universally read as by our parents, and Jane Austen seemed to us absurd until many years later. We could only enjoy these classics when they were read to us. In the days of which I am speaking, reading aloud was part of the routine of the evening, and long descriptive passages which would have been wearisome to us in reading to ourselves were a pleasant enough accompaniment to sewing, knitting or drawing.

I fancy that the American and English Evangelicals were responsible for a children's literature of a very morbid and sentimental kind that abounded in our day—stories of little philanthropists, baby missionaries and children's death-bed scenes. Such were *Ministering Children*, *Jessica's First Prayer*, the *Maggie and Bessie* series, *Little Women* and *Misunderstood*. We loved the sentiment but disliked the children, and the fault of the books, as we see now, lay in the fact that they were written by people with a didactic intention, and the authors were more anxious to point a moral than to tell the tale. It was refreshing to come to something more robust in *Aunt Judy's Annual* and *Holiday House* and the stories of Mrs. Ewing. We liked *The Fairchild Family* and *Tales of Maria Edgeworth* because of their oddity. The children described were so unlike ourselves.

For boys there were always stories of adventure, and the

gulf between boys and girls at that time was strongly marked in the books provided for them. No boy would have endured our mental pabulum, and we were delighted when we could lay hands on a smuggling story or the *Children of the New Forest*.

It is sad to record that we never went through a period of belief in fairies or of absorption in fairy stories. It was not an imaginative but a very matter-of-fact age, and nurses and parents discouraged all that was not founded on fact. We were not bidden to find gnomes, elves, fairies and nymphs of wood and stream, and, although there was yet no 'new psychology' alarming us, like Pharaoh, by the interpretation of dreams, there was felt to be an element of danger in letting the fancy of children have free play, and the educational value to them of inhabiting a world of mystic beauty and of cultivating idealism was not appreciated. It is a real loss to little children to miss this experience in life, and the time in which it is possible to have a genuine faith in fairies is of necessity brief. The passionate cry of Peter Pan, 'You do believe in fairies, don't you?' can only find its true response in those emerging from babyhood. It is the most natural thing possible for the little child to people her world with creatures from the spirit-world, whether angels or fairies, for all around her are things new, mysterious, and wonderful. There is but the narrowest dividing line, if any at all, for her, between the world she knows and the supernatural world she imagines. Wordsworth has shown this in the familiar and much misunderstood 'We are seven.'

It seems to me a gain, from another point of view, that children should pass through a period of belief in fairies. So many people suffer from the absence of any

mystic sense at all, and lose very much thereby. It is surely better to have that cultivated in childhood. The material life makes its demands soon enough, while to have intuitions and awareness to the supernatural ignored in babyhood may mean that possibly they can never afterwards be awakened.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL DAYS

'This we learnt from famous men,
Knowing not its uses,
When they showed, in daily work
Man must finish off his work,—
Right or wrong, his daily work,—
And without excuses.'

RUDYARD KIPLING: *A School Song.*

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL DAYS

THE real difficulties in education arose for us when Latin and Mathematics were required. Resident governesses were difficult to get and few were either well educated or in any sense cultivated. High Schools had barely come into existence, and sound teaching in Classics or Mathematics was not procurable. We were fortunate enough to have a well-known preparatory school for boys close at hand, and my uncle, the Headmaster, was consulted, with the result that I was admitted to certain classes in the school, the only girl among twenty-five boys. This school has been described admirably in *The Day before Yesterday* by Lord Frederick Hamilton. Many distinguished men, including Lord Balfour and Mr. Trevelyan, President of the Board of Education, had been among the pupils.

It was rather overwhelming at first. I was older than the boys and very ignorant, but very keen and intensely conscious that it was a great concession on the part of my uncle and an experiment that must not fail. The boys were interested, and amused at the new pupil, but affected in no other way. I realise in looking back now how absurd I must have seemed to them in my eagerness to do well. Their contempt for learning was no mere pose. Their slowness and inertia were a perpetual astonishment to me ; yet, when they tried, their work was almost invariably

better than mine. My general level was, perhaps, higher than theirs; my best was nearly always less good.

It was at The Grange that I discovered those radical differences between boys and girls in their work which I have proved again and again in later days. The differences appear also in play at a very early nursery age. The eternal feminine is noticeable at once in an interest in people and a regard for the opinion of others, as marked as the boy's complete disregard; the girl loves direction and help in all that she is doing, while the small boy accepts an offer to play with him with obvious condescension and on the distinct understanding that the game is played as he wishes. A boy is far slower than a girl in 'the uptake.' How incredibly stupid the boys at The Grange seemed in grasping an argument, seeing a point! But they do not forget so easily, and are as a rule more accurate in remembering details. They express themselves clumsily, and will never use more words than are necessary either in speaking or writing. Girls have a fatal facility in expression, and the teacher who insists on brevity is regarded as an enemy. Boys, in essays, have no fear of propounding their own views, however crude, and no desire to refer to literary authorities. One cannot alarm girls more than by insisting on independent criticism. They prefer to spend hours in a library consulting innumerable books and making notes. The essay produced will be correct and well put together, but merely flavoured with the writer's own opinion. This difference is no doubt accounted for in part by the fact that boys have many other absorbing interests, which make them wish to dispose of work as quickly as may be. They concentrate violently for a few minutes, and by exercising powers of thought and memory, are content to produce something that will just pass



L. M. 3

A FAMILY GROUP. 1879.

muster. Certain it is that girls would rather spend time over their lessons than face the fatigue of concentration, nor have they generally a knowledge of either their capacity or their limitations.

It was my good fortune at The Grange to be under one of the best teachers I have ever known. My uncle was a man of immense determination, extraordinary patience and steady purpose. His conception of teaching was not that of his day. He cared little about the ground covered in a lesson, but greatly about intimate acquaintance with every inch of the road. I do not remember what books of Virgil or Caesar we read, but I know that we learnt how to read a Latin author, and, although we might only get through twenty lines in a lesson, we could answer by the end of it every grammar question that could be set upon the passage. I remember an old Grange boy telling me in after years at Oxford, where we met, that the Latin learnt at The Grange had carried him through Eton without further trouble, so thorough had been the work. The same principles were applied to all preparation. Hurry, or lack of thoroughness in the smallest detail, was foreign to the whole spirit of the place. Examinations were not greatly considered, and certainly no cramming was permitted; it would have been an impossible thing to contemplate at The Grange. The lessons were always full of interest. There was nothing commonplace about them, and all kinds of odds and ends of information and illustrations diversified the morning operations. My uncle expected a good deal of his pupils, but he never spared himself, and 'education by consent' was achieved even though labour was distasteful, because the boys realised that the master was working wholly for their good, and that he could have used other and shorter methods less good for them with considerable saving of

trouble to himself. He always treated the boys as very intelligent human beings, and the more responsive of his pupils appreciated enormously the confidence he showed in them. Only those occupied in education realise how difficult it is to continue to demand effort and to refuse to spoon-feed children. It is much easier for the teacher if, out of her knowledge and experience, the children can be fed: and it may seem to save trouble to both parties, but it is an evil and short-sighted policy, for we only possess truly and value greatly that which we have captured for ourselves with toil and struggle. I find it in my heart to be grateful for the unrelenting rule at The Grange that inaccurate preparation had to be repeated until perfect. The standard of perfection in matter and method was very high, and habits of neatness and exactitude were formed and not easily lost.

The lazy boy had short shrift with my uncle. It was no crime to be stupid, but it was a crime to be careless, and the boy who was clever and idle had no mercy shown him. Careless work had to be done again and again, guessing was severely punished. The punishment for all sins in class was known as 'spatting,' and the ceremony took place in my uncle's study. I believe that it consisted in a certain number of strokes on the hand with a strap, though I never saw the instrument of torture. I felt it a terrible moment when a boy, from sheer carelessness, made the same mistake in construing time after time, and the sequel, 'I am afraid, Johnson, you must come with me,' was I knew inevitable. The remainder of the class were utterly unsympathetic, and the chief interest for them lay in seeing, when the procession returned, whether the victim was in tears or not.

I only learnt in after years that there had been some

sense of injury among the boys because, as they put it, nothing ever 'happened' to me. It was not known to them that for my mistakes in work I went through tortures from interviews in the study, which were to me far more painful than any sparring would have been. My uncle said little, but made me horribly ashamed of bad work. It was a comfort to me that the boys never saw me depart from the house after these talks, and I always took a long route home in order that no traces might remain when I arrived for lunch.

But there were treats as well as punishments, and occasionally on a beautiful summer day, when we had settled down to work very reluctantly, there would be a sudden announcement that a picnic had been arranged in the woods, and a whole holiday was given. We had complete freedom on these days. Every boy had his lunch with a bottle of ginger-beer, and could take it where he liked, roaming through the Hatfield woods.

Much as I enjoyed the years at The Grange, I am no advocate for co-education. The arguments urged by those who are most sympathetic and have personal experience in organising co-educational schools leave me unconvinced. For instance, it has been said that the separation of the sexes for ten years of conscious growth gives a poor chance of 'men and women having anything in common, not only of interest and memories, but of power of mutual comprehension and sympathy.' But is it seriously believed that no sympathy and understanding have existed hitherto between men and women, and that it has remained for the twentieth century to bring them into a happy relationship through co-education? Or again, is it the fact that a school of a hundred boys and girls can be really like a home, and reproduce in any appreciable way home-life? There

is a world of difference between a family of brothers and sisters and a group of boys and girls drawn from widely different homes; and, do what you will, there must be as great a difference between the relations existing between masters and pupils and those between parents and children.

Again, it is contended that boys become more self-controlled by association with girls, and that one of the great advantages of co-education is the increased respect that boys have for girls when they have worked together; while girls become less dependent and 'bookish,' and more inclined for active thought. This is indeed a result much to be desired, but, in point of fact, the amount of work done together in some co-education schools seems to be very small; it is admitted in one school that the average age of the girls is slightly higher than that of the boys in the same form, that girls are weaker in Science and Mathematics, and that the first class in Mathematics consists solely of boys. This hardly looks like co-operating on equal terms, and after the age of sixteen it is said to be desirable to have more specialisation and a clear differentiation in curriculum.

If we turn from work to games, it is clear that here, too, boys and girls cannot meet as equals and must be catered for differently. In some schools tennis seems to be the only game in which they join forces, and while boys play football, girls play basket-ball. Yet we are told that boys learn through the presence of girls to be more regardful of others' feelings, less rough in deed and less coarse in speech! One is tempted to wonder if the girls, being 'imitative,' meet them half-way, and become more rough in word and deed. It is hard to believe that a boy does not resent the necessity to curb the instinct towards free exercise of his strength, which is a natural reaction from hours of physical inactivity in school, and I doubt whether the playing field is the right

place to demand of him that courtesy and care for the weak which are claimed as part of the chivalry that co-education schools develop.

In family life, sisters are not as a rule treated with this consideration until long after school-days. If there is a fishing expedition their lot is to put on the worms for the elder brothers, or to stay at home, and they meekly choose to serve. Strength—yes, even brutal strength—is secretly admired by girls, and the age of the ‘ perfect gentle knight ’ is not the school age.

We are assured that co-education does not produce the effeminate boy, nor the hoydenish girl, but that each learns only what is best from the other ; the boy becoming more careful and reflective over his work, and the girl losing the inclination to titter and giggle, and gaining self-reliance. But we also understand that this is achieved by taking many precautions and instituting most careful supervision, and it is conceivable that these things may militate against that perfectly natural relationship which it is the aim of co-education to establish.

It is something of a shock to be told that it is necessary to set up two different standards of punishment, and that, in one school at least, for the same offence—a girl and boy talking together at forbidden times—the boy alone was punished. My experience is that the sense of justice is most keenly alive in girls, as well as in boys, and that this vicarious suffering on the part of the boy would not be tolerated by any public school girl. Yet if corporal punishment is desirable for boys, it is clear that the treatment of boys and girls cannot be identical.

It is claimed above all that co-education induces a natural, un-self-conscious, healthy intercourse between boys and girls and later between men and women ; that it

destroys foolish sentimentalism and morbidity, and improves the moral standard. But it may be answered that among the co-educationists there is a tendency to exaggerate the development of sentiment in girls, who are accused of being more interested than boys in love-making. Public schools for girls have worked the same cure which co-education is said to have discovered. Corporate life, class-work and team games have brought wholly new interests into girls' lives. They have fostered and developed good comradeship, unselfishness, honour, courage, the power of playing a losing game and the qualities of leadership; and girls of to-day between the ages of fourteen and eighteen are healthily absorbed in both work and play. The life of a great school is, in fact, in danger of being overfull and over-stimulating. There is certainly little time left for writing love-letters, and few will be found to listen to sentimental effusions; for if the tone of the school is good, public opinion, which is more powerful than the most autocratic head master or mistress, will condemn anything of the sort.

Some years ago a parent came to see me just before her girl was leaving school. I asked her if she thought her daughter improved by her school life, and in what way. She hesitated for a moment and then said: "Yes, greatly improved. D. has learnt now what her brothers learnt at their public schools, that "there are a great many things which a fellow can't do"; and when I caution her about some particular matter, she answers, "You needn't bother about that, mother: it just isn't done." "

I believe that separate schools for boys and girls are best, but I am sure that it would be well if it were possible to have a mixed staff in each. The war forced upon boys' schools the necessity of having some women teachers.

and on the whole the experiment seemed successful. I wish that it were more common to have men on the staff of girls' schools, both for the sake of the women teachers, who should have more of men's point of view and men's society than is generally procurable, and for the children, who would gain in many ways from the usual placidity, deliberation, and general outlook of a man.

The small increase of co-educational schools in England in the last twenty years seems to show that the system, which is so popular in America, does not appeal to us in the same measure. There has been time to see results, and I am inclined to think that co-education is for the few rather than the many, for the exceptional rather than for the normal boy and girl.

I do not know precisely when the University Extension Lectures were inaugurated, but in or about the year 1880 a class in English Literature was arranged for girls in our village. The lecturer was Mr. Courthope Bowen, and the lessons were wholly unlike any we had ever had. The teacher's one desire was to make his audience feel the beauty of poetry, enjoy the music of verse, appreciate the value of words ; and he succeeded by very simple methods in stirring at least one of his audience to an enthusiasm which determined once and for all the line of future study. He read admirably, with a restrained and quiet fervour that was most impressive, and *The Forsaken Merman* was the first poem chosen to capture our imagination and our hearts. It is a great moment in youth when the discovery of the power of beauty is first made. It may be the beauty of human beings, of nature, of literature or of art, but the conscious delight in it does not belong to the very young, and the moment of awakening is definite and memorable. It is the realisation of a great possession, a

wonderful inheritance, a wide field to be explored. One understands at such a time the man who found the pearl of great price, and for joy sold all that he had and bought it. A great step forward is taken in one's educational life. An appetite is aroused which refuses henceforward to be denied satisfaction, and no further stimulus from without is needed. This moment of appreciation comes at very different times, according to the temperament of the child, but it is useless to attempt to hasten it. Parents are very foolish when they insist on taking children for long walks to see beautiful views, or to picture galleries or churches, before they have shown any desire for the beauties of nature, art or antiquity. We all resent being put in the position of pretending an admiration we do not feel, or else being considered dull and stupid and abnormally insensitive. The cause of our discomfort comes in for a share of our resentment, and the moment of happy enjoyment is indefinitely postponed.

But while contending that conscious appreciation of beauty may be slow in coming, there is no doubt that natural surroundings have a stronger influence on children than is sometimes supposed, not only on the imaginative and poetic, but on the more ordinary and prosaic. We know it from the vivid background each one of us has to the events of early life. The setting of memory is on a grander scale than the actual, because we were so small that all our surroundings seemed large.

We go back to the house in which we were born, and the rooms that seemed halls have become closets, and the corridors narrow passages. We wonder how we ever sat on those tiny window seats, or how we could have thought it a long climb up the shallow stairs. The shrubbery, that to our childish minds was a wood or forest, we find to be

only an ugly clump of laurel bushes that wants clearing out; and the summer-house, that was our castle and manor-house, yes, even the king's palace, is but a rather damp, dank room. Everything has dwindled, and we wish that we had not returned, like 'Conrad in quest of his youth' in Leonard Merrick's humorously pathetic story.

But every time we think of those early days, we shall see the house and garden as we saw them in childhood, and it is always the mystery and the beauty and the sunshine that remain if one was happy at all; for, just as we cannot reconstruct the sensation of physical pain, but can reproduce the sense of joy and the thrill of unexpected happiness, so also, it seems to me, every impression made by the ugliness of things is far less permanent than that made by beauty. No doubt there is a subconscious effort to retain that which we enjoy, and equally a desire to throw off that which is painful. True, there were moments of utter abandonment to misery in youth which are unforgettable, but these are few for most children, and life for the most part abounded in colour, movement and scent.

Children are much more keenly alive to all sensations than we sometimes realise, and they have not the control or power of safeguarding themselves that their elders have. Why do we always think that the summers were hotter when we were young, and the winters colder than they are now; that no gardens are quite so gay as the special garden we played in and loved, and that no flowers smell half so sweet; that cherries and strawberries had more taste in those far-off days and the nightingale's song was louder? When Rupert Brooke in *The Great Lover* gives us that wonderful catalogue of joys of sight and sound, scent and touch, he brings back to us 'old, forgotten, far-off things,' and the vivid memories of childhood's

days. And it is with us, as it was with him, the little things, which counted so much, that bring back such tender dreams of the long ago. Rupert Brooke had so much of the eternal child in him that to the end the freshness of those impressions stayed with him.

Impressions crowd one upon another so rapidly as life gets fuller and the pace of it increases, that there is no possibility of each making the deep dint it made on the baby mind unencumbered with perplexities and reflections ; and this fact has some bearing on the bringing up of children. It means much to store their minds with happy memories, to give them sunny rooms, surround them with gay colours and beautiful forms, and to create for them little happenings that cost nothing, but make the days delightfully eventful for them.

CHAPTER IV

OXFORD : SOMERVILLE COLLEGE

‘Proud and godly kings had built her long ago,
With her towers and tombs and statues all arow,
With her fair and floral air and the love that lingers there
And the streets where the great men go.’


J. E. FLECKER : *The Dying Patriot*.

CHAPTER IV

OXFORD : SOMERVILLE COLLEGE

SOMERVILLE in 1883 was in her first youth. She was in truth only four years old : a well-behaved child, still quite shy of the society in which she found herself, expressing herself clearly enough when asked to do so, but not pushing herself forward in any unseemly manner, anxious to learn how the people around her behaved, and very eager, alert, active, as a child should be. She took what was given her and said 'thank you,' and only whispered discreetly to her elder brothers when she desired some special fruit at present out of reach : and she generally got it, though there were times when she had to wait.

It was the spirit of unobtrusive receptivity and deference to University traditions and prejudices rather than a demand for rights which the Principal, Miss Shaw Lefevre, took pains to instil into the first students. She always said that she learnt much of her wisdom from Miss Clough, but her methods were really her own. She was herself very shy, though a woman of the world, handsome and very distinguished in appearance, with dignity and graciousness of manner, and immensely popular with Heads of Colleges, Professors and Dons. She had lived in the world of politics and was an ardent Liberal, though never wishful to appear a partisan among the students. Many of us learnt to love her ; all respected her and were



proud of her, while some were afraid of her and felt sensitive about her silent watchfulness and unspoken criticism. Her foresight prevented any serious difficulties of discipline. They were anticipated and nipped in the bud, and most of the students would have hated to give the 'Head' the embarrassment and pain of dealing with insubordination.

We were a strange company, numbering in 1883 twenty-five and growing in the following three years to about forty. In those early days there was no pressure on space, as at present. There were two or three scholars from the schools that were pioneers among girls' day schools, the North London and the Manchester High School. Then there were students fired with ambition to equip themselves for a professional life, and lastly a small body of rather older women eager to grasp the new opportunities, and inspired by love of learning for its own sake without any ulterior motive. One or two were fascinated by the sense of adventure—the desire to take part in a new experiment. These last filled an occasional vacancy for a term or two and disappeared entirely when the applications of the professional class increased. They were a real asset in our social life. There was the delightful American who bought flowers for her room and chocolates for her friends with a largesse that made one gasp, and who, on a dull November day, would give one a bright half-hour by engaging a hansom cab to drive us round Oxford and show us the principal buildings, as if we were strangers to it, with a running commentary, such as, 'Guess there's been a recent fire here to turn all these buildings so black.' 'S'pose the window boxes are in the married fellows' lodgings and looked after by the wives.' Charlotte Rosalys Jones was a very real refreshment. Another of these students was a vehement anti-vivisectionist and left



Photo by Hills & Saunders, Oxford.

SOMERVILLE HALL, OXFORD, 1883.

no stone unturned to convert us all. Enthusiasm, intensity in work and play, marked this early body of students : everything mattered immensely. I remember one ardent soul who could not be satisfied until she had addressed us all on the impossibility of being properly educated until we had made a thorough study of Economics, and in her moments of excitement she would dash into one's room, at any hour of the day, with astounding questions, such as, ' You don't believe in infant baptism, do you ? '

The College was so small that it was in truth but a large family and had little of the institution about it. Oxford was very kind to its youngest nursling ; girls were welcomed to College concerts, dinners and soirées. Some of us were very raw, and the Head did much to train us by taking one and another under her wing to many an evening party, and quietly insisting on introducing us to Professors, who, with a charming courtesy, gave us of their best. We were encouraged to take interest in all that was going on, and were so small a body that we could slip unobserved into public meetings.

It was a time when party feeling ran high, and I well remember the excitement in 1886 over Home Rule, and addresses by Dillon and Michael Davitt, who, though a guest of University College, was screwed into his rooms by undergraduates. There was a thrilling moment when William Morris came down to speak for a political club, and was refused a hearing ; the platform was rushed and the guests were hurried ignominiously out of the hall. They were great days in Oxford, with Jowett at Balliol. Mark Pattison at Lincoln, Ruskin as Slade Professor, and among others Professors Freeman and Max Müller. Ruskin lectured on Du Maurier and Tenniel ; and Professor York Powell, who could describe inimitably the ways and

manners of the Middle Ages, would give us the recipe for some special dish mentioned in the *Canterbury Tales*. Then there was Professor Wright, a marvellous teacher of English language, who would sometimes return a student's paper with the crushing rebuke, 'Don't you write rubbish; and if you do, don't send it to me.'

Somerville has always been blessed with devoted friends, and then as now University supporters spent much time and thought upon its welfare. More especially are we early members of the College bound to give thanks for Arthur Sidgwick, Henry Nettleship, Dr. Woods of Trinity, Professor Pelham, Mrs. T. H. Green and Mrs. Vernon Harcourt, at whose houses we had an unfailing welcome, and who, in later days when we returned to Oxford, made us feel it to be going home. What a royal memory Mrs. Green has still, after forty years, for her Somerville friends, and how refreshing to find rooms with the same restful charm as of old, faithful to Morris papers and cretonnes. Who has not been struck on returning to his University after many years to find that those who have never left it still remember the incidents of his residence, the interests he had, and the contemporaries who were his friends? When one thinks of the rapidity with which generations of undergraduates succeed each other, it is a constant surprise to find that one's personality is still kept in memory by many whose acquaintance had only been enjoyed for a short spell in youth.

Oxford has a wonderful power of conferring on its inhabitants the gift of eternal youth. Is it the sense of contentment which certainly belongs to University Dons, or is it the flood of young life perpetually being poured into the University, which prevents age from being emphasised and keeps alive an interest in all the pursuits of youth; or

is it a quiet dignity, serenity and repose borrowed from the surroundings that is so preservative ? It is because they are in heart perennially young that they are able to understand, and entertain so perfectly, and without any sign of weariness, generation after generation of men and women undergraduates. They have the happy art of treating them as friends and equals. It is the potential man or woman whom they behold in the clumsy, silent, stupid boy or girl. They have the eye to see in the raw material the finished product and treat it with unvarying respect. They thus help to produce what they visualise, and it was no small part of the undergraduates' education to come into touch with that delightful Oxford society.

I should also like to bear testimony to an unfailing readiness on the part of the busiest men in Oxford to spend time and trouble in manifold ways where the assistance of a scholar and an expert is essential, but could be neither expected nor claimed. Many have benefited by this ungrudging help, whether it be in advice on literary efforts or counsel on a future career.

All my life I have experienced extraordinary kindness in the busiest people, and I am not peculiar in this. One of the most striking instances I can remember was in connection with a post for which I was asked to become a candidate. The conditions were not very satisfactory, and I hesitated in sending in my application. I was living at Farnham at the time ; and my sister had told the Bishop of Winchester (the news of whose elevation to the Archbishopric of Canterbury had only just been announced) of my difficulty. It was Friday evening, and he was to preach his first sermon as Archbishop-elect in Farnham Parish Church on the following Sunday. It is easy to imagine what the pressure of correspondence and inter-

views must have been, and it would have been natural that he should be absorbed in his own affairs. I shall never forget his sending for me, and the care with which he went into every detail of my problem ; and he insisted that I should return to see him on the Sunday morning at ten o'clock with the draft of a letter which was to receive his approval before it was posted. I was astounded that he should propose to see me at such a moment, but he seemed entirely detached from any thought of himself. This, I am sure, is only one of many cases that might be cited by others, who have found that however busy he may be with the affairs of Church and State, he has always leisure to sympathise and advise.

Sometimes the kindness of a well-wisher is embarrassing. There was a parent of an Irish pupil at Cheltenham, a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, who was much disturbed that I had only the Dublin M.A. degree obtained in the days when Trinity College offered to women a recognition denied by Oxford. One day he came to see me with an old College friend of his, and informed me solemnly that they had decided to approach the Dublin authorities with a view to securing for me an honorary Doctor's degree. I thought their solicitude very charming, but could see no possible reason why they should succeed, and the Irish authorities shared my view, to the great chagrin of my two old friends.

I confess to some disappointment that Oxford entirely ignores the unspoken claims of its old students now non-resident, who fulfilled the whole duty of woman in the days of their University life, but could not, in all cases, take the same examinations as graduates.

In later years one becomes, perhaps, a little critical, and one finds the older Universities somewhat patronising

in manner, limited in sympathy and inclined to take themselves too seriously. There is an air of kindly pity for any one who is outside the charmed circle of University life, and all within it seem to live in an atmosphere of mutual admiration, for the whole society is bent on exalting all its members. An indirect and somewhat amusing result of this corporate self-sufficiency is seen in a sublime disregard of fashions and conventions, except such as are self-ordained, and in a tendency to ignore the trend of modern thought and feeling as unworthy of consideration. New movements, for example, in art, music or the drama, and the changes of political life do not readily awaken interest, and nowhere do people care less about being in any sense modern. Members of a University seem to feel, like the Jews of old, that they are set apart as a chosen people, and it might truly be said that, although no place is more ready than a University to entertain strangers, it has rarely discovered that it has been entertaining angels unawares.

There is a tendency both in schools and Universities for people to remain too long in one set of surroundings. The younger generation do not want to confine themselves to friends of their own age, but they do want those in authority not to become stereotyped, academic, limited in outlook, disinclined for new points of view and new enterprises, remote, patronising, having lost interest in those mundane concerns—dress, games, fun, which are matters of real moment to the young of both sexes.

Graduates, on first entering professional life, are apt to carry with them an irritating self-sufficiency. They have caught the infection, and are convinced that they are conferring a favour by bestowing their University culture on any institution. It takes some time for their com-

placency to disappear and for them to become aware of their ignorance of their trade. They have a firm conviction that they have been in mid-stream, while the rest of us have been loitering in the backwaters of life. We have probably all been guilty in our day and generation of this well-bred arrogance. I confess I do not find it in those trained in London or the provincial Universities, and in teachers it certainly detracts from their value and teachableness at the outset of their career.

But, to return to those early Oxford days. We worked very hard and played hard. We were very conscious of the fact that we had to establish traditions, and everything was new and delightful. After organised studies in school, it was an immense pleasure to be free to arrange one's work as one pleased. What an enormous change it was after 'doing lessons' to be 'reading a subject' and, after considerable control, how surprising to receive the minimum of direction in one's work and be left firmly to oneself. One can hardly exaggerate the delight of getting beyond elementary work and coming to grips for the first time with a subject, and investigating a special field of knowledge, however small it may be. The continual association with specialists and real authorities on the subject one has decided to study dignifies and changes one's entire conception of intellectual work. Nor is it wholly unimportant that in a University, while mainly occupied with a special subject of study, one is never unconscious of the other branches of learning and their absorbing interest for their devotees, so that one's vision is being perpetually widened, while one's grip on some small branch of the tree of knowledge is growing tighter. It is these things that contribute to the rapid development of the student. Nor could one be insensible to the concentration of all those around one on the

things eminently worth having in life ; a new standard of values was gently pressing on one day by day. College life was in those days, and is probably at all times, wonderfully free from pettiness or personal gossip, or anything approaching snobbishness. To women, more than to men, the delight of having three years in which it was right to be selfishly absorbed in intellectual pursuits was unspeakable, for claims small and great are apt to beset women in life at a very early age. And, in addition to this, there was the appeal made by the beauty of Oxford, and the pride in having a part, however small, in the University life. Truly

‘ Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.’¹

I wonder whether the compulsion to make a success of the new venture explained why each student seemed to show her pleasantest side. ‘ Third years ’ were amazingly good to ‘ freshers ’ ; and though many were dull, I do not recall one who was offensive in manners, or outrageously selfish, or vain, or aggressive. But it was the spell of Oxford upon us. One summer a vacation walking party was formed, and care was taken to choose those who would prove good comrades even if things went wrong, but we were quite out in our reckoning. Once away from Oxford we suffered from perpetual grumbling and discontent in the very person who had been hitherto wreathed in smiles. She was always late ; she sat down in puddles, was clumsy and irritating ; and, worst of all, her sense of humour deserted her, and she bitterly resented our finding her ridiculous.

We saw little of the undergraduates—much less than the student of to-day ; I do not think that we cared. They were not to us the important part of Oxford, and

¹ Wordsworth, *Prelude*, Bk. xi.

dances and tea-parties, except at Commemoration, did not constitute Oxford life as we conceived it. The corporate life of the College, our societies, our games, debates and tennis matches were delightfully new and attractive. I remember the excitement of the first inter-collegiate hockey match—our disgust at the defeat of Somerville after her captain had been laid low with a black eye from some one's stick, and our triumph on hearing that Lady Margaret in the flush of its first victory had imitated the undergraduates and had a bonfire in the garden, with the result that hockey had been forbidden for the ensuing term. A boat on the river was much coveted, and a sympathetic Professor selected four of us, and himself acted as cox. The authorities considered it imperative that our first appearance should be at a time when we should not meet any of the undergraduates, and we had one glorious hour of coaching before breakfast on a May morning on the Cherwell, but why it was never repeated and no race ever took place we never knew.

The fact that we were no less ambitious for the reputation of the College than for our own made it a matter of course to work hard, and failures or successes counted much with so small a body. Some of the proudest moments of those days live in one's mind—the day when the men's examinations were open to women—the year in which a woman gained a First in *Literae Humaniores*. Quite simply, without fuss or flourish of trumpets, women vindicated their right to a share in the riches of the University; quite simply their work and ability was standardised in the schools and there was no need to continue to assert what had once been proved. Did the pioneers, as they thought of equipping women for professions, dream of the changes to be wrought in the social life of

England—the transformation in the relationships of men and women which dates from the end of the nineteenth century? I think not. Up to that time girls met men only in their own homes under careful supervision of parents, and any intimacy or evidence of more than ordinary friendship might provoke an inquiry as to the intentions of the possible suitor, which either precipitated an engagement or ended the visits. But when men and women worked side by side in laboratories and lecture-rooms a new comradeship began, which had its foundation in community of interests as often as in admiration, and might and did often grow into a friendship such as of man with man or woman with woman. Men were no longer debarred from women's comradeship. And if they could work together they could also play together, go to theatres together. Intercourse became more natural and more easy. I was told a delightful story of an elderly bachelor at a garden party at the beginning of the twentieth century who, remembering his own youth, was most anxious to avoid interrupting the love affairs which he imagined were going on in a distant part of the garden. He was, however, firmly led in the direction of the tennis courts by his companion, and, to his surprise, the only subject which was being discussed on the other side of the hedge by a charming boy and girl was the absorbing question of the best polish to be used for brown boots. Already the change in relationship had begun.

I think there can be little doubt that indirectly the higher education of women discouraged marriage in as far as it gave to women an alternative which had none of the dullness or limitations of home life, and much of the variety and opportunity for initiative and energy which would not normally be found in domesticity. And for men, the desire

for women's companionship could be satisfied in great measure without undertaking the increasing financial burdens of married life. On the other hand, it may be urged that the marriages which did take place among the professional class were more often satisfactory, being founded on greater knowledge and truer sympathy, and that professional life encouraged and brought in its train a much more rational and closer association of men and women. The novel excitement and independence of life offered to us great attractions. We were fired with the sentiment of the explorer : new seas were to be charted by women ; new avenues of usefulness were before us ; and, with something of the arrogance of Bacon, we cried, ' We have taken all knowledge to be our province.' Even school teaching was regarded with respect, not dismay. Its living wage, its opportunities for promotion, its possibilities of putting into practice all kinds of reforms and of infecting others with our own enthusiasm, made most of us eager to get posts and content to keep them for years.

All this has changed now. There is little remaining of the romance or idealism, seriousness or pioneer spirit of those early collegiate days. The attitude of the modern woman student is precisely that of the ordinary undergraduate. To many work is a necessary evil, and three years of University life are a very delightful game before the real business of life begins. It is inevitable that these changes should take place in process of time. We see precisely the same thing happening in Government offices and in the nursing profession. During the war many opportunities were given to women to undertake new and responsible work, and, animated by patriotism and attracted by novelty, they did the work in a way that impressed even the most determined opponents of women.

We were all apt to draw a distinction between men and women at their work, and note that women were more conscientious, quick and concentrated. It was quite true for the time being, but it was not, I believe, a fundamental distinction, and girls in offices, clerks in banks, young teachers in schools, to whom their work has become a commonplace means of earning their living, are as apt to be unpunctual and to spend time in gossip as the men with whom they are compared. In fact, I am inclined to think that women weary sooner and find any monotony in life more insufferable than men, as, unfortunately, only too often they have not the physique which enables them to get a sufficient amount of change and recreation.

Looking back over forty years to the joys and gains of undergraduate days, probably either man or woman would rank highest the friendships formed with all sorts and conditions of people. They are like no others. The great bond of the daily life together in youth differentiates them from ordinary friendships of later years. We lived those three or four years together in as close a companionship as we chose, often working together, eating together, and grumbling over the food, as is the way of all healthy young people, arguing perpetually and finding immense pleasure in expressing preposterously crude and very newly found views as matters of profound conviction. And there was the delightful opportunity of making friends 'because it was she, because it was I,' as Montaigne puts it, and not because we were neighbours or because our parents were friends. Let us confess honestly, also, that there was not much more difficulty in dismissing a friend than in acquiring her! Fierce controversies would naturally spring up between those whose attraction for each other lay in the fact that they were both young, vital

and full of opinions ; and to quarrel over an argument was hardly less invigorating than to discover that a friend shared with you a devotion to Wordsworth so deep as to have been carefully concealed by both for fear of ridicule.

College friendships sometimes degenerate into a sentimental devotion, good neither for the worshipper nor for the one worshipped. Girls of eighteen or twenty are apt to run into these follies, and it would be well if every girl were warned of this tendency to an absurd relationship. She should be put on her guard against suffering it, either in herself or for herself in others, and made to understand the loss of dignity and self-respect to which it invariably leads. I have seen women looking like tragedy queens, standing in a corner with arms crossed and head sunk on breast like the picture of Napoleon on the *Bellerophon*, glaring at the object of their desires till one began to fear that the drama might indeed end in murder.

As a preventive there is nothing so effective as a strong and sane friendship with one who is incapable of recognising the possibility of any other relationship. It was my good fortune at Oxford to find such a friend. She was one of a large family and had many brothers, which doubtless accounted for her understanding of good fellowship in work and play. She was built on generous lines, and body and spirit were finely matched. 'She looked as if she could lead armies,' said one of her Oxford contemporaries, and certainly she was a born leader. Tall and handsome, with the bearing of a queen, she would have been noteworthy in any company of women, but more especially in a group of somewhat insignificant, ill-dressed, ill-proportioned girls, many of whom had that disregard for dress and appearance which distinguishes all too often the scholar. Plain dressing and plain features seem to accompany high thinking

quite as much as plain living. She was, moreover, radiantly alive and enjoying. She was the best woman tennis-player in Oxford; she was no mean violinist, and would have achieved distinction but for the fact that concentration for one so versatile was a sheer impossibility. She was desperately interested in life, in people, in history, art and social questions, and she gave herself to each. Underlying all was a spirit ardent with love and goodwill, a belief that the whole world was lovable and well-intentioned, and a humility that honestly thought others so much wiser and better than herself that it was a privilege to be allowed their acquaintance. One's cheap hopes and mean ambitions shrivelled up in her presence. We used to spend Sunday afternoon together reading, writing and chatting, and I remember my fury when a neighbour joined us. The others were blissfully unconscious that anything was amiss, and later I expressed my wrath at the invasion. I was met with frank surprise and the unanswerable question, 'But why shouldn't she come? Don't you like her?' and I knew once and for all that jealousy or pettiness was inconceivable to my friend, and that the only way to keep her was to be ready to share her. Forty years of unbroken friendship and deep admiration have been built on that understanding.

The possession of a castle of one's own was, perhaps, one of the keenest joys of College life, and a very feminine side of the girl student was apparent in the interest she showed in its decoration and her delight in the first accumulation of possessions. The College room became the shrine of happiest College memories; quiet readings with friends, long talks over the fire in winter, supper-parties at dead of night in commemoration of a hockey or tennis victory, secret society meetings to effect the reformation of some

abuse, or to start some new enterprise. Tea and cocoa parties in one's own room gave opportunities of exercising hospitality and were an excellent training school in the art of entertaining. Many a shy, awkward girl acquired self-confidence and ease of manner by the end of her fourth year, when she became a person of some importance in the College social life and was expected to make the 'fresher' feel at home.

The combination of business and leisure and the blessed power of arranging one's time as one pleased were among the many smaller delights that contributed to those perfect College days. We could turn night into day if we so elected, and none would gainsay us. We could make experiments with life, and control was so slight as to do little more than provide a pleasant feeling of being protected by rules from making mistakes that would have proved one unversed in the ways of the Oxford world. The student at College was regarded as a woman capable of governing herself, equal to responsibility, with a judgment concerning the conduct of life that could not be expected in a schoolgirl. So long as she showed herself trustworthy, she was in most matters a law unto herself, though public opinion operated as a strong controlling force. The students themselves constituted a formidable body of censors, and any breach of manners, or conduct likely to damage the reputation of the College, was subjected to a criticism which it was impossible to disregard.

There must indeed be a potent charm about a life which makes one greet as a long-lost sister any comrade of those ancient days, even though she be one whom one rarely saw and hardly ever talked with. True, she may remind one only too painfully of the flight of years, and suggest that one has probably developed into as quaint an unlike-

ness of one's youthful self as she is. Ah, but the new figure has still for us the old background in which we first saw her ; and memory calls up a May day, the apple trees in bloom, the Somerville lawn and the old grey house covered with wistaria. How beautiful it was ! And the Oxford bells are ringing, and we are reading Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* for the first time, and life is indeed very good.

CHAPTER V

THE OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL

‘To youth there comes a whisper out of the west :

O loiterer, hasten where there waits for thee

A life to build, a love therein to nest,

And a man’s work serving the age to be.’

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT : *The Wanderer*.

CHAPTER V

THE OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL

I MUST confess that on leaving Oxford I was guilty of the University arrogance to which I have alluded, and anticipated no possible difficulty in obtaining a post, but imagined that innumerable places must be waiting for my services. I am told that many others make the same confession, so I hope that I was not abnormally self-satisfied. It was a real surprise when week after week passed by and no claimants appeared or letters with offers of work arrived for me.

For a time I went on in a happy confidence that something would soon turn up, but about the middle of the long vacation, having made no efforts myself, it was borne in on me that I should have to be the suitor and that it behoved me to make haste. I studied advertisements and soon found a High School in a blanket manufacturing town in the Midlands requiring a teacher. I applied, and was one of the five selected candidates. With great anticipations I travelled up for the interview. Among the candidates were an L.L.A. of St. Andrews and a B.A. of London. My interview came early : the Board of Governors was weighty and imposing, and entirely in harmony with the blanket manufacturing town. Before seeing them I had made up my mind that I should be far more fortunate if rejected than if elected, and it was with a sense of patronising pity that I greeted their first questions : ‘ Why have you no

letters after your name? Do you think that what you have done at Oxford is at all equivalent to a St. Andrews L.L.A.?' I tried to show becoming humility and to explain the truth quite gently. The next question was a comparison of the London B.A. and the Oxford Honour Schools, and my spirits rose, for it became apparent that no one without letters after her name would have a chance of appointment. I retired to tell the other candidates the good news, and waited just long enough to hear that the B.A. was chosen, but I did not know how great my escape had been until the next day, when I heard from the secretary that I had run second for the post.

I think that this experience somewhat damped my ardour, but fortunately I was saved from any further applications for posts by an invitation to return to Somerville as secretary to Miss Shaw Lefevre. It was a novel and delightful experience, and I have had reason in later years to be constantly grateful for the training in business matters which I received. The Principal was slow when I wished to be quick, and very deliberate in making decisions. Dictated letters which I eagerly wished to despatch were often kept for a day, or even two, for reflection. It was soon apparent to me, however, that such delay was really an economy in work, and that one letter sufficed where two or three might otherwise have been needed.

The appointment was never intended to be other than temporary, and at the end of the year I was again faced with the necessity of finding a teaching post, but the problem was solved for me by the Principal's action in herself securing for me a vacancy at the Oxford High School, and she added to her innumerable kindnesses by obtaining the permission of the Council for me to remain in

residence in one of the cottages belonging to Somerville while occupied with work outside.

The Oxford High School had a great reputation, established under its first two Headmistresses, Miss Benson and Miss Bishop. It was one of the schools belonging to the Girls' Public Day School Trust, of which the history has lately been written. This record shows that the work of the promoters is indeed worthy of all praise. They were the pioneers before the main boarding schools for girls, with the exception of Cheltenham, had started, and they organised and popularised a sound education for girls, and greatly influenced public opinion in favour of giving to them the same advantages which had been given for years to boys only. The work of women at the University could not possibly have been so satisfactory and successful without the High Schools of England.

The movement was democratic from the outset, and it was a brave thing to determine that class prejudice should be ignored and the fees made so moderate that an excellent education should be within the reach of all but the very poor. I wonder whether the Founders of the schools anticipated what really happened. The teaching was so superior to that given in any private school or procurable at home, that parents, who in ordinary circumstances would not have dreamt of allowing their children to be the companions of those of a different social standing, could not bear to deprive them of such educational advantages.

Perhaps it would have been well if the boldness which characterised the new venture had impelled the promoters to charge higher fees, in the trust that the education to be provided would so appeal to the public that they would be willing to make financial sacrifices in order to obtain it; from the very beginning the schools were hampered, as were

the University Colleges, by lack of endowment, and it has been difficult for them to march with the times in the matter of equipment, laboratories, playing fields, gymnasiums and swimming baths. The only way in which capital for the High School venture could be found was by forming a company, and the shares were taken up largely by those whose means were too moderate to allow of investments with no return. Consequently the claims of the shareholders had to be met as a first charge, and for many years there was little surplus to spend upon extensions and developments. When one reads the story of Oundle and the comparative ease with which laboratories were added, halls built and money was forthcoming for farm lands, one realises how the energy and driving force of a great personality are reinforced by having in the background a wealthy body who have the power, and often the will, to make great schemes effective. Owing to financial difficulties the Founders of the High School movement were faced by perpetual limitations in the realisation of their ideals and expansion of their ideas.

They had, however, no lack of enthusiasm, and it may be questioned whether poverty is not indeed a blessing in disguise in some ways, especially at the beginning of a venture. Zeal and devotion must be forthcoming to achieve success in spite of drawbacks in equipment, and nearly all the enterprises in women's education have been fortunate in enlisting the support of those who have thrown themselves heart and soul into their work with a passionate feeling that is almost parental.

The unsparing devotion and hard work on the part of Council, Headmistress and Staff of each school cannot be exaggerated. So much depended on the mistresses that it called forth all their powers, and if there were no Govern-

ment grants to help provide what was needed, there was at all events a blessed freedom from control and interference which largely compensated. There is nothing more stimulating than a free field for initiative and experiment, and the characters of the early Headmistresses were impressed on their schools. They had a free hand in dealing with internal arrangements, curriculum, timetables, Staff; they were full of plans and keenly alive to new ideas. Their work was heavy, but it was the kind of work that refreshes as well as fatigues, for it was work to enjoy. There are few things more delightful than to plan a new scheme, while there is nothing more devitalising than to fill up forms and draw up statistics. There comes, unfortunately, to many a Headmistress a melancholy moment when direct contact with children as teacher has to be abandoned for purely administrative work.

The organisation of the Oxford High School was admirable, and the devotion of the teachers to their work beyond praise. Although young, it was a place with traditions, and as a novice in teaching I received much help and kindly criticism from both the Headmistress, Miss Soulsby, and the senior members of the Staff. I am inclined to think that in the desire to redeem the education of girls from dullness (consequent on the ignorance of governesses in the past and their entire dependence on text-books), there was too much insistence on making lessons attractive and relieving the children of all drudgery. If pupils were inattentive, mischievous or careless, the fault was attributed not to 'original sin' in the child, but to the incapacity of the teacher to maintain the interest of the class. The history lesson must have the charm of a fairy story, and mathematics should present themselves as a delightful puzzle.

But perhaps this is being hypercritical, and most of the reforms were wholly good. The children were kept very busy ; lessons were short and the time-table so arranged as to give variety and avoid fatigue, and a girl's physical, mental and moral characteristics were studied by her teachers as never before, with the most surprising results. On looking back one is astonished at the amount of work accomplished in the three and a half hours at our disposal in the morning. The very limitations on time necessitated most careful preparation of lessons in order that the maximum result should be obtained by a class in the minimum time ; and the girls did their part, for on the whole the preparation done by them without help in their own homes was excellent. It is clear, however, that day schools have manifest disadvantages, if they have also one or two advantages over boarding schools. The claims of home and of school are often difficult to reconcile, and the conscientious girl is overweighted by her obligations to both. In some homes the provision of a quiet place for preparation is difficult if not impossible, and the home organisation naturally cannot in most cases be so well adapted to the child as the boarding-house, where the household arrangements are determined by the needs of the younger generation.

High Schools had no playgrounds in those days. There was just a yard used for ' break ' in the middle of the morning, but no corporate games were arranged. The Founders of the movement had failed to see this necessity for their schools and did not provide sufficiently for physical development. The great boarding schools were established later to remedy this defect and approximate more nearly to the public schools for boys. Such schools as Roedean, Wycombe Abbey, the Godolphin School, Salisbury, and

the Cheltenham Ladies' College grew and flourished exceedingly. Then came the charge that athletics were occupying too large a place in the life and affections of the girls. A parent brought a girl of seventeen to me at King's College with the pathetic appeal: 'I hope you will try to make her care for books. She went to school with a taste for literature and returned with nothing but a taste for hockey.' It was complained by many that a place in the hockey XI was far more coveted by a girl than a high place in her form, and that this was recognised and hardly discouraged by the authorities.

In this, as in all other matters, it is difficult to keep an even balance. Another drawback due to the lack of games in the High School was the loss to the girls of all that can only be learnt on the playing field, and there was also the disadvantage that the teacher met her class only in the schoolroom. But although opportunities for intercourse were confined to the morning's work, every mistress was expected to know her class individually, and the right attitude of pupil to teacher seems to have been established from the beginning. This was no small achievement, for most of us who remember governesses remember also with some contrition and much amusement the way in which we made their lives a burden to them, and for the most part the small esteem in which they were held. The same was certainly true of the 'select academies' of a previous generation, of which pictures have been drawn for us in *Villette* and *Vanity Fair*.

There is, I think, nothing more surprising and significant in the history of English education for girls than the complete transformation effected in the space of one decade—1875 to 1885. Buildings specially and carefully designed for school purposes had sprung up in town after

town. A new type of teacher had appeared—educated, cultivated and in many cases trained—and the methods of teaching had changed entirely. The revolution had extended even to art and music, and pupils no longer copied weak water-colour sketches assisted by their drawing master, or spent dreary hours in playing scales and exercises to attain manipulative skill, while understanding nothing of the meaning of the music which they glibly performed. Corporate life for girls had become a reality, and enjoyment had taken the place of boredom for the large majority of pupils. It was striking to notice the eagerness of the children to come to school and the delicious self-importance of the smaller ones. They were all anxious to make friends with, and do services for their mistresses, and a public school spirit was rapidly gained. There was the sternest condemnation of anything like favouritism, and from the very first a wholesome tradition was established that no presents should be given to members of the Staff.

There were no punishments; they were not needed. And there were no rebels as far as I know. From time to time one came across refreshingly mischievous children, and the University town and gown antagonism reappeared in a small daughter of a College Don, who was found drawing inky pictures on the pinafore of the daughter of a draper sitting in front of her. When reproved she protested that the child's father could provide her with plenty more! The affectionate concern for the Staff was shown by one girl, often very troublesome, who, after asking leave to speak to the teacher, murmured in agonised tones: 'Please don't wear that dress again; it makes you look so thin.'

The stimulus of examinations was introduced without allowing them to become a bondage and oppression, and

there is no doubt that girls enjoy working for a definite end and have a laudable and natural ambition to have a seal set on a year's endeavour.

Not only was the educational advance extraordinarily rapid, but it met with almost immediate popular recognition and approval. There is no record of opposition or of detraction. Many of the schools of the past faded away, and some were modernised or converted into High Schools. Surely a more bloodless and complete revolution never took place, and that it was so reflects immense credit on the wisdom and knowledge of the needs of the times possessed by those who conceived and carried out the idea.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE

‘ I would build
Far off from men a college like a man’s,
And I would teach them all that men are taught.’
TENNYSON : *The Princess*.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE

IN the summer of 1889 a vacancy occurred for an English Literature lecturer at Holloway College, and I became a candidate for the post, though any one who has spent six years in Oxford feels every year more reluctant to leave. I well remember the day of my election and the desperate depression that followed, as I walked through the streets of Oxford in the evening and felt that it would no longer be my second home.

It will be known to most people that the Royal Holloway College was founded by Mr. Thomas Holloway, and the aim of the College is best described in the following extracts from the Deed of Foundation, 1883. 'The College is founded by the advice and counsel of the Founder's dear wife, now deceased, to afford the best education suitable for women of the middle and upper middle classes, and is intended to be mainly self-supporting.' It was the Founder's hope that the College would become a Women's University conferring Degrees, but pending the power to do this being obtained by Royal Charter or otherwise, 'the students shall qualify themselves to take their Degrees at the University of London, or at any other University of the United Kingdom where Degrees may be obtained by them. . . . The Founder believes that the education of women should not be exclusively regulated by the tradition and methods of former ages ; but that it should be founded

on those studies and sciences which the experience of modern times has shown to be the most valuable, and the best adapted to meet the intellectual and social requirements of the students. . . . It is the Founder's desire that the domestic life of the College shall be that of an orderly Christian household. . . . It is the express and earnest desire of the Founder that the College shall neither be considered nor conducted as a mere training College for teachers and governesses.'

In 1886 the College was formally opened by Queen Victoria. It was perhaps the most splendid gift to women of the later nineteenth century, and might well have served as an example to other benefactors. It is the only College for women which has not had to grapple seriously with the difficulties of debt, though it has had to face financial problems hardly anticipated by its Founder. The College was not full at first, but the maintenance expenses of the huge building had to be met from the beginning, and it was said that in the early days the fees of the students only paid for the electric light.

In addition to the building, the benefaction included a large number of scholarships; but perhaps one of the greatest boons conferred by the Founder, and duly appreciated by every generation of students, was the happy gift of a site in one of the most beautiful parts of Surrey, close to Windsor Forest and Virginia Water, with wonderful views, and large grounds with flowering shrubs.

It seems clear that Mr. Holloway had been inspired in some of the arrangements of the College by Tennyson's *Princess*. 'Let no man enter in on pain of death' was not inscribed on the gate, but the grounds were surrounded by a high brick wall, and no tradesmen were at first expected to come up to the building. Goods were delivered at a



Photo by C. W. & Co. v.

THE ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE. 1889.

distant part of the grounds and arrived by a trolley through an underground passage! It was popularly reported that this plan had to be abandoned because the temperature of the passage, which was also connected by pipes with the engine houses, caused the butter to melt in its transit to the larder.

The students were always to the Founder the 'young ladies,' and the plans for their comfort were thought out with great care. Each member of the College had two rooms, and there were larger Common Rooms for groups of six students. Special furniture was designed for the studies and solid comfort abounded. Holloway College was sometimes accused of being luxurious, but, though magnificent in its equipment, this was certainly not the case. Students found no bells in their rooms, and had to fetch whatever they wanted that was not supplied by the ordinary household service. They soon learnt to cultivate their memory when forgetfulness entailed a walk of one-tenth of a mile to fetch a pair of gloves, or to turn out the electric light rather than incur a fine.

It is hard to give any idea of the scale on which the College was built. The length of the corridors was such that it was impossible to recognise those walking at the other end, and it took nearly five minutes to walk from the south end of the upper east corridor to the north end of the upper west. It was a journey worth considering to visit a friend at the opposite end of the building, with the chance that when accomplished she might be out. A new student, who walked in her sleep, found herself on her first night in College in the library at midnight, with no power of determining how to go east or west. I fancy she was found and piloted to her room by the night watchman, who with dog and lantern tramped through every part of the College, bringing with him a pleasant sense of security, and dis-

creetly omitting to notice those who wished to remain unobserved, as they scuttled homewards from a night revel.

Mr. Holloway's knowledge of educational equipment was naturally limited. The plan of the building was simple, but most unsuitable for a College. There were two quadrangles, in the centre of one of which Queen Victoria in marble reigned supreme, and in the other Mr. Holloway pointed out the beauties of the building to his wife. The two quadrangles formed an oblong, and corridors of students' rooms, measuring one-tenth of a mile, ran the whole length of the College on two sides. The connecting links were formed by the library and museum on the south, the kitchen and dining-hall in the centre, and the picture gallery and chapel on the north. It is obvious that all these links were extremely inappropriate as passage rooms, and to avoid using them as such, it was necessary to cross the quadrangles by cloisters, which in those early days were open. Only one lecture theatre was originally provided, and clearly the intention was that lecturer should follow lecturer in unending succession. Laboratories also had to be speedily built.

But if there were deficiencies there were also manifest assets. No other College could boast a picture gallery, a museum and a large chapel, and the provision of a representative collection of modern English pictures was significant of an awakening on the part of England to the educational value of Art. The decoration of the chapel was somewhat flamboyant, and, though the coloured bas-relief of Adam and Eve watched over by a white rabbit, at the east end, struck one as extraordinarily comic, one soon grew to have almost an affection for it.

The immense importance of the library in a College isolated from University and city can hardly be overrated,

but it was an act of wisdom to leave the main provision of books until the College opened, and the bookshelves filled with great rapidity. Money was forthcoming for the real needs of the students, and the process of elimination of worthless books did not have to begin for many years.

There will always be a difference of opinion about the architecture of Holloway College. There were students and others who, owing to the glamour which surrounded their life within its walls, indignantly protested against adverse criticisms on the immense red brick structure, but, however imposing it might be, it had to some of us a strangely suburban look. It has never quite succeeded in being anything architecturally but an overgrown villa, and its likeness to the château of Chambord, on which its architect depended for inspiration, is hardly greater than to the grey stone Colleges of Oxford. It was aptly described by a student of those early days as

‘A huge gigantic structure, but enshrining memories gay,
This pompous, well-kept edifice, this College Holloway.’

The ugliness of the building, and of the cement paths thoughtfully provided by the Founder to prevent the ‘young ladies’ from having damp feet, may be forgotten in the lapse of years, but no one could forget the beauty of the gardens, the little copses carpeted with bluebells opening out into buttercup meadows full of purple orchis, and, best of all, most characteristic of all, great slopes of flame-coloured azaleas. The peculiar, pungent, intoxicating scent of azaleas will always bring back to a Holloway student sunny afternoons, when, though surrounded by many books and full of good intentions, she dreamed rather than worked, gazing over a sea of orange to the blue hills beyond.

There are three ways of building for educational purposes, and it is difficult to decide between them. In many colleges and schools, lack of money has seemed to call for a gradual growth of buildings, and a constant readjustment, and want of consistency of scheme and of architectural unity have resulted. For example, at Somerville we find a red brick wing added to an old stone manor-house, and no less than four types of architecture combined in the whole College, which is really not one building but a group. This plan is hard to avoid when the success of an enterprise is uncertain and when money is procured with difficulty. In such a building there are many inconveniences and considerable expense is involved in replanning and enlarging, but it becomes a record of development, and the various parts have a definite relation to the period at which they were added.

In the case of Holloway College the whole was planned and executed for the ultimate number of two hundred students before even one had been entered on the books, and great faith was evidenced by the Founder in the higher education of women in that he made this provision at a time when the women students at Oxford and Cambridge were hardly in excess of two hundred. Probably he was expecting his College to become at once a University for women, but there is a real disadvantage in immense halls and corridors occupied by only thirty or forty students.

The third, and we venture to think the best, plan is to

‘Image the whole, then execute the parts—

Fancy the fabric

Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,

Ere mortar dab brick!’¹

¹ Robert Browning.

The disadvantage of this is that for many years there must be an incomplete architectural effect, which might remain permanently should money not be forthcoming or the venture be in any way a failure, but there is security from the disadvantages of the other two plans.

In 1887 when the College was opened it was not easy to find the right Principal. Women's colleges at Oxford and Cambridge had not been long enough in existence to provide some one of suitable age with academic qualifications, and yet it was clearly important that the traditions of a University College should be established from the outset. The choice of the Governors fell on the Head of the Oxford High School, who was a woman of remarkable force of character, and who, from living in a University town, might be likely to have knowledge of the ways of a University although she had never been at a Women's College. Miss Bishop was a born organiser, and her administration of a somewhat unwieldy machine was admirable. Curiously enough, colleges for women have not been distinguished for excellence in household management or for a high standard in service and food, but Holloway College in all its household appointments and equipment left nothing to be desired. This is not a negligible matter. Girls, who will most of them manage their own houses or those of other people, should at least have a high standard of cleanliness and orderliness set before them, for they readily become slovenly and careless in dress and messy in their rooms when absorbed in intellectual work. They are less critical than men about food, and are only too content with a bun and a cup of tea for every meal. But they require nourishing food even more than men, and will only have sufficient if it is served in an attractive way. It seems strange that women

should be so often incapable of securing satisfactory results in this their own province, and in clubs we have always noticed the superiority of those which have both men and women members. Perhaps the more general impecuniosity of women has something to do with this. Certain it is that the last thing over which men economise is the first over which women save.

In common with many others in those days, Miss Bishop held the vocational view of the teacher's life, and like Miss Benson, her friend, model and predecessor at the Oxford High School, she was unsparing in her demands on herself and others. I have never known any one with a stronger sense of duty, or more thorough in all that she undertook. In those early days we were apt to feel this oppressive, and to clamour for more variety and amusement than the College could offer. I remember my determination to take all the opportunities possible of week-ends in London, and my annoyance at the surprise shown by the Principal that amusements should count with one at all in term time. Nothing was said, but I left her with an uncomfortable feeling of playing truant. For her, all struggle between duty and pleasure seemed to have long ceased, and it was simply a matter of course to put work before all else. I still think we needed the change we craved, but, years after we had parted, the memory of Miss Bishop acted as a reproof to slackness or indifference in any part of one's work.

She was a delicate woman and a martyr to neuralgia, and seldom, I suspect, out of pain. Noise was an agony to her, and order and neatness a passion, so there was naturally more sense of restraint than youth could quite bear. It was not easy for her to cease to be the schoolmistress and to realise that, if the students were to be

transformed from schoolgirls into women, it was to be done by treating their immaturity as maturity. She was not one of those who suffer fools gladly.

But in times of trouble or anxiety we found how tender was her heart and how ungrudging the help she gave. She was of the stuff of which martyrs are made. She loved Holloway College with the devotion of those who have created, but greater still was her love of the Church of England, and she would have gone to the stake for her faith. I think that she would have been happiest as Mother Superior of some convent or would have proved a second Saint Teresa or Saint Hilda.

We were a very small body of lecturers—ten in all: two men, non-residents, Professors of Classics and Mathematics, and eight women, of whom one or two were of middle age and had had experience in school teaching or as governesses, and in some cases had gone up late in life to Oxford or Cambridge. They were ripe scholars and trained teachers, but for the rest we were very young, and the consciousness that we were but a few years in advance of our students, and that they were more than usually dependent upon us, was a great spur to study. It was splendid to have the chance of reading more widely and thoroughly than had been possible in the three all too short years at the University, and every lecturer with an interest in the intellectual awakening of human beings and a real joy in her subject is to be envied. There is the excitement of proselytising, and something of the thrill that the public speaker, singer or actor feels in arousing a response.

We were almost as wholly dependent upon the College for our social life as if we had been indeed cloistered. Consequently, Staff and students were thrown together

and the relationship was unusually intimate. Probably students would admit that no small part of their education was derived from quite informal talks with the Staff, and the meetings of small groups of friends in lecturers' rooms late in the evening. The Staff also formed and directed all kinds of societies. There was a most energetic political society in which governments were formed, ministers censured, and parties reviled each other with great eloquence and all the heat of the House of Commons. Feeling ran so high on the question of Home Rule that the most intimate friends who belonged to opposite sides found it impossible to meet for the usual cocoa party that took place when the debate was over.

Games were, however, the chief distraction, and the provision made for them was as excellent as it was meagre and poor in the High Schools. The ninety-five acres belonging to the College gave every opportunity for tennis and hockey, and at these, also, the Staff joined the students. There was a swimming bath and a gymnasium, but in the summer term the river was the chief delight. We were near enough to Egham to spend long Saturday afternoons on one of the most beautiful stretches of the Thames between Windsor and Staines, and many girls who had had no chance of learning to row became expert in the management of a boat, either in the narrow backwater, or in the midst of craft in a lock.

The isolation of Holloway College from all the interests of a University town was a very serious drawback in some ways, and was bound to affect the development of both students and lecturers. Among the students there was little or no admixture of elder women, who would have helped to promote conversation connected neither with work nor exclusively with play. The majority had come

straight from school, having seen nothing of the world, and were not stung to a consciousness of their ignorance by meeting all sorts and conditions of people older and wiser than themselves, nor had they the opportunity of that cultivation which comes from intercourse in Oxford or Cambridge society with some of the keenest intellects and ablest living men. It was noticeable that, although there was excellent provision of newspapers and magazines, the number of regular readers among the students was comparatively small, and it is probable that this will always be the case where public matters seem remote from the private interests of the individual, and where little or no incentive to keep abreast of the times is provided by contact with men and women of affairs in the larger life outside.

But, as compensations, there must be taken into consideration a far healthier locality than either Oxford or Cambridge, more space within and without the College, and more comfort ; and, moreover, less danger of exhaustion from a multiplicity of conflicting interests. Against these, however, must be weighed a tendency to over-absorption in work, and to a narrower outlook.

For the lecturers too the limitations were very serious in the days when the College was so small. We were thrown upon our own resources, and immune from criticism either from colleagues or students, which is not good for any teacher. It was often a race to get ready the lectures of each term, and the preparation, almost single-handed, of her students for higher examinations taxed the young lecturer very severely. Her experience of teaching had to be gained, and her reading had often been practically limited to the three or four years spent at the University.

I always felt that at Holloway College the chief difficulty

was to secure that change of attitude from pupil to student which we have commented upon as achieved quite naturally in the environment of the older Universities. The girls were too docile, and as they were often dependent, when the College was small, on one lecturer, they were apt to take her opinions ready-made, and the more forceful she was the more completely did the students acquiesce in her judgment. It is perhaps unreasonable to complain that the response was too ready and complete, but there is nothing so disconcerting and difficult for a lecturer to deal with as a slavish reproduction of her point of view. To express opinions that cannot be challenged because the student is too ignorant to know better than one knows oneself, and to find one's phrases—decently veiled, it is true—reappearing with tiresome frequency is deadening to lecturer and pupil alike; and yet I do not know how it is to be avoided, since the persuasiveness of a very keen, enthusiastic personality is greater than that of most books, and there must be very definite limitations on the Staff available for any one subject in an isolated small College.

With these many drawbacks, it is little less than astounding that there should have been so many examination successes and so much achieved in general culture. It would be hard to overpraise the determination of the early students to make the best of their opportunities, and to compete, though handicapped, with other resident Colleges, and Holloway soon made itself felt, though, at that time, it was not an internal School of the University of London. In those days the majority of students read for the London Degrees or for the Oxford Final Honours Schools, and everything possible was done to compensate for the loss of residence in Oxford. The Staff were supplemented by Oxford lecturers; the library grew apace; and the

results on the whole were excellent, several First Classes being gained. By 1900 the prestige of the College had become so great that, although farther from London than any other component part of the University, it was admitted as a School of the University of London in Arts and Science.

A married friend, who was a pupil in those early years, tells me that, in looking back, the most striking feature of the life seems to her to have been the complete contentment of the whole body of students in each other's society. There was no desire for other than women's companionship. The time had not come, and probably many women would echo the view propounded to me by an artist that the three years of University life are precious as a time of comradeship, and should be undisturbed by sentiment, and certainly free from love-making or anything connected with it. It is the time when one is ceasing 'to think as a child,' and there is a desire to put away childish things. One revels in the exchange of ideas with older people, and those of one's own sex and age, without any emotion that tends to self-consciousness. It has the charm of being the only life in which it is possible to have a very large measure of freedom with a very small measure of responsibility.

CHAPTER VII

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

'I go hence to London, to the gathering place of souls.'

E. B. BROWNING.

CHAPTER VII

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

AFTER five years at the Royal Holloway College it was borne in on me that some change of surroundings was necessary for myself and a change of lecturer probably equally necessary for the College, and most opportunely an advertisement appeared for a Vice-Principal for the Ladies' Department of King's College in Kensington Square. I had never heard of a women's College in Kensington, but the lure of London after Egham was great, and I determined to apply. The conditions were not financially attractive. Furnished rooms, service and £120 a year would be scoffed at in these days, but somehow poverty at that time seemed to matter so little, and one had always been poor and known how to make the most of a small income. Moreover, there was the sense of adventure and a task which gave scope for initiative.

The candidates were reduced as usual to five, and we were summoned to appear before the Council. For women on these occasions dress is a matter of almost as great importance as a suitable manner. It is not wise to be too smart, for it may argue that you are not serious-minded, but rather 'on pleasure bent.' On the other hand, dowdiness means dullness. I delight to remember how many candidates I have successfully dressed for interviews for appointments. I was conscious that I was

at a disadvantage in being young, and chose discreetly a black-and-white dress and small cottage bonnet with strings, quite in the fashion. The interview was short and the questions amusing.

Ques. : Could you read an Anglo-Saxon book ?

Ans. : Yes, if time were given me.

Ques. : Could you manage Professors ?

Ans. : Hitherto I have never been asked to do so, but relations with my colleagues have always been happy.

And so on.

The following October I began my new work, and for fourteen years enjoyed one of the happiest educational posts for women in England. I found in King's College an atmosphere of peace and goodwill, of helpfulness and happiness. The Department had been opened originally as a centre in Kensington for lectures to ladies by the Professors of King's College. This was before the days of the University Extension movement, and the courses on Literature by Professor Hales, History by Professor Samuel Gardiner, and Divinity by Dr. Barry had been so crowded that the premises in Observatory Gardens had to be exchanged for the larger building in Kensington Square, which had been occupied by Talleyrand in days long past. In addition to the lectures there was a flourishing School of Art and excellent music teaching. Science was almost non-existent.

There was at this time practically no connection between the Women's Department of King's College and the University of London, except that the Professors came to us from King's College in the Strand, which was a School of the University. The lectures at Kensington were valuable to the College in the Strand as providing additional remuneration to an underpaid Staff. I have never

known any College in which so much labour was given ungrudgingly for what was universally recognised as wholly inadequate pay. The question of salary was rarely mentioned. There was no grumbling, nor any inclination to leave for more lucrative posts. Time after time offers came, and men preferred to stay in a place that somehow gripped their hearts by its very poverty and need of them, and its strong corporate spirit. It was in truth a 'beloved society,' and few Colleges could have been more free from envy, malice and all uncharitableness.

Dr. Wace was Principal during the first part of my term of office; in fact the vacancy which I filled had been caused by his marriage with Miss Schmitz, the first Vice-Principal. It was a great privilege to work under him, though we did not agree on women's higher education. 'Why should women be taught logic,' he would growl out, 'when the charm of a woman is that she is wholly illogical?' But he would talk delightfully about old days, when he was on the staff of the *Times*, and Delane would return an article to have a comma put in correctly; or he would make me read a French book on Style, and wax eloquent on the subject of 'proper words in their proper places.' And though he was so fierce a fighter and positively alarming when angry, he was also most courteous and considerate. At the end of each term he found time, however busy, to write me a letter of thanks for the term's work, and at the end of the holidays there would be a welcome awaiting me. In my last talk with him I reminded him of this kindly thought, and the reply was characteristic. 'Ah, did I do that? I am glad I did my duty.' It would be well if all employers and employed recognised the value of such acts of courtesy in a busy life.

London University had from the first been liberal-minded

enough to throw open all its examinations to women as well as to men. The University was for many years a purely examining body, and University College, King's College and Bedford College were the centres where students were prepared for the Degrees of the University. University College was wholly co-educational. The Professors of King's College in early days taught the men students in the Strand and the women in Kensington, while Bedford College was wholly for women and to some extent residential. So there was every variety of college for a student's choice, and the plan of inter-collegiate lectures gave the students attached to one College the opportunity of attending the lectures of a specialist at another. The students at Bedford and Westfield Colleges, for example, used University College in those days for some of their science work. When the University was anxious to be constituted as a teaching University, it was decided to institute an internal Degree, confined to students who had been attached to one of the Colleges which were recognised as Schools of the University, and to continue to allow other students in the provinces, or working at home, to take the external Degree. The regulations with regard to these Degrees were not identical. In order to encourage students to enter a School of the University, and have the advantage that comes from attending University lectures and seminar classes under Professors, the internal examinations were made in some respects less exacting than the external.

From the moment I took up my work at King's College my mind was full of the idea of creating a true University College in Kensington, and I soon began to select from my classes the most promising students and encourage them to study English Literature seriously, and to begin to prepare for examinations. There was a splendid field for

enterprise. Women and girls of all ages from seventeen to seventy came to the lectures, some only to one course, once a week, and some to several. Old ladies followed a favourite Professor and came year after year. One of them apologised to me for discontinuing my lectures, but she could no longer manage the stairs. Married women arrived gasping for a 10 o'clock lecture, having snatched an hour with difficulty from their household duties at that time in the morning. And there were innumerable girls who had just left school and were anxious to continue their education, and others who were in the hands of governesses unable to teach this or that subject, and glad to supplement their lessons by lectures. There was the girl whose business in life was to be a social success, and to whom the purchase of a new hat was of infinitely greater importance than acquaintance with the Puritan Revolution, even though the story of the latter was told by Professor Samuel Gardiner, who spoke of Strafford and Hampden, Falkland and Cromwell with the intimacy of one who lived more habitually in their society than in that of the men and women of his own day. One beautiful and extraordinarily attractive girl was the despair of her music teacher, because she had always some preposterous excuse for not practising. She urged quite seriously that having her hair washed had, of course, destroyed one morning's work. Then there were elderly women who seemed to think lectures would act as a panacea for the ills of life. 'I want to take a course of lectures on Ethics or Browning. I have had a very strange life,' began one of these. I showed her our prospectus, ignoring the reference to her private affairs, but this did not satisfy her. Like the Ancient Mariner she must tell her tale, and I listened to a strange record of religious difficulties and dissatisfac-

tions. She had been in turn Anglican, Roman Catholic and Agnostic, and had come when white-haired and sixty to study Browning's philosophy of life and try to find peace.

The demands made upon one were manifold. One afternoon I heard the unmistakable American accent, and an altercation with the hall porter concerning the possibility of an interview after office hours. A bustling, business-like little woman was brought to me. She wanted lectures for her daughter just leaving the Empress Frederick's School in Germany. The girl had spoken German and French, but English had been neglected, and we must put this right. I suggested some English Literature lectures. 'Yes, I guess that would do. Perhaps you would like to know who I am. Well, I am the only woman correspondent on the —— *Times*, and on the day of Queen Victoria's funeral I cabled 4000 words right off.' I murmured my wonder and admiration, and proposed other classes for the daughter, including History, but this was rejected indignantly. 'Oh, she don't want History: she knows History right through,' and I retired smiling.

Sometimes girls arrived sent by their parents to arrange for work which was obviously against their own wishes. I was goaded to desperation by two sisters, who, stalwart, heavy and dull, would give me no help in arranging their work. Did they like languages? No. Mathematics? No. Science? No. Literature, History, Art, Music? No. Games? No. Were they ill? No. Then I turned and rent them, and told them it was a sin to live in a world teeming with interest and wonder and to care about nothing.

In a non-resident College there is for the keen student the difficulty of satisfying the claims of home and College, of her domestic and intellectual life. For many girls the home life is, I know well, a necessity—they cannot be

spared ; and then a compromise is all that can be achieved, but it is effected at considerable cost to the worker and to the work. There is no question that the dual life is difficult and wearing, and for any girl who has the instincts of a scholar I would plead that she should be given, if possible, freedom from home ties for a time, with the certainty that she will chafe less, and return to them more willingly, when her ambitions have been somewhat satisfied.

Kensington Square had retained a character of its own, and, though becoming rapidly overshadowed by the great shops of the High Street, still preserved in its houses and manners relics of the days when it was part of a village on the outskirts of London. There was a certain neighbourliness among the dwellers in the Square, unusual in London. This was probably due to the influence of families of old standing who had retained their houses for generations, like the Lushingtons and the Bowmans, and had come to know each other and had gathered round them their friends and acquaintances.

One of the oldest residents, Mrs. Arthur Roberts, a student of the College in its earliest days, and its warm supporter throughout her life, will be remembered with pleasure and affection by all who knew her. She was the 'mother of the Square.' She had friends everywhere among rich and poor. She was an excellent *raconteuse*, with a fund of stories of the past, which she told inimitably—and probably partly invented—as, for example, of the old flower-seller at the corner of the Square, who explained the loss of her donkey simply by 'The Lord called him and he had to go.' She loved youth and gaiety of heart, and nothing ludicrous was allowed to escape her searching but kindly eye.

Among those who sometimes attended lectures at King's

College were Princess Margaret and Princess Patricia of Connaught, the former eager and interested, and with an irresistible charm of manner; the latter less of a student by nature and giving the impression that she longed always to be out of doors. Then there was Evelyn Underhill, beginning her literary career, and writing, twenty-seven years ago, for our College Magazine a characteristic and charming 'parable' for students entitled *The Quest of Truth*.

Another contributor to the Magazine was the Indian Sarojini Chattopadhyay, a protégée of Mr. Edmund Gosse, and well known as a poetess in her own country. With her sweet voice and dreamy eyes she gave an impression of being yielding and gentle, but she was in truth an ardent reformer, with a passionate longing to right the wrongs, as she saw them, of her country.

Another very enterprising member of the College, Helen Fraser, had turned her back on all the allurements of travel and society, and elected to devote herself to scientific studies. She was a cormorant for work, and bubbling over with enthusiasm and ambition. Nothing would deter her, neither lack of training nor the fact that she had had no proper school education and had left school age behind her some years. She had the look of one 'conquering and to conquer.'

These students, born not made, had in many cases a delightful audacity, a lust for the joy of overcoming difficulties. To them *Res severa verum gaudium est*. Obstacles existed only to be overcome. If one told them their ignorance was so crass that it was useless to attempt some particular examination in less than a year, they quietly and politely replied they would take their chance in three months, and, moreover, succeeded. No wonder we struggled to give them all that they could desire. They deserved every encouragement. Helen Fraser had a

somewhat breathless record of examination honours and varied experiences, and as Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan was distinguished in the years of the war, first as Chief Controller Q.M.A.A.C. in France, and then as Commandant W.R.A.F. in England.

Another of the students at King's, Edith Thompson, attained a position of distinction in the war of which any woman might be proud, and her friends and relations still prouder. She would be the first to attribute some of the phenomenal success in everything she has undertaken to the College, in the manifold activities of which she played so important a part. She took no examinations, but she was a natural leader, whether in the organisation of games, in writing articles for the Magazine, or gathering all sorts and conditions of students together in good humour and good fellowship. She remains perhaps the most popular, capable, and energetic of all the comrades of those days. She has a magic touch which ensures success to all she undertakes. Is it sympathy, or humour, or entire unself-consciousness, or a quick grasp of essentials, or a driving force which never fails till her task is completed, that accounts for this exceptional instance of efficiency? She was, and is indeed one

‘Who with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to her wish or not,
Plays in the many games of life that one
Where what she most doth value must be won.’¹

These students were all occasional or non-matriculated, and for the first year or two there were no others. But slowly we gathered together a small band of more ambitious spirits, able and willing to give up their days to study and to take a University Degree. This was not so

¹ Wordsworth, *The Happy Warrior*.

easy to organise as might have been supposed. Although many of the courses were of University standard, they had no reference to examination requirements and were primarily designed for those who demanded popular lectures. It was not possible to provide a complete special curriculum for a mere handful of six or seven students. We were desperately poor. I had to think twice before I could order a new hall doormat, and lectures must at least pay their way. We had no endowment, no scholarships, and a debt on our buildings, which we were determined to pay off, and eventually we succeeded. We were young and obstinate and enterprising, and I was convinced that the raw material as regards brains of our first candidates for Honours was exceptionally good. So we plunged into the fray, taking advantage of inter-collegiate lectures at University College, where the students came under the kindly care of Professor W. P. Ker, much loved and known to men and women alike as W.P. Then by good fortune we secured a lecturer on English Language from Oxford, and with much reading in many places the deed was done, and the first students entered for examination in 1899.

Not, however, without discouragement from those accustomed to teach in an academic centre of learning where all was perfectly organised for the advantage of those who sometimes worked little, and cared little for the pursuit of knowledge. I remember a talk with a Professor—now my very good friend—who, within a few months of the examination, being himself depressed by our prospects was rapidly depressing his pupils. He assured me that I was attempting the impossible. 'But,' I replied, 'you think the students themselves to be promising?' and he admitted that they were good, but not equal to the task before them—an Oxford Final Honours School—and held

that it was an enterprise doomed to failure. I was discouraged, but obstinate, and we left no stone unturned to secure at least a creditable result. I confess that our surprise was almost as great as our joy when both candidates obtained a First Class. Since those days they have had many other honours heaped upon them: Caroline Spurgeon obtained her D.Litt. in France and holds a Professorship in the University of London, and Edith Morley is Professor at University College, Reading. A year or two later a King's College student, Olive Bray, was alone in the First Class of the same Oxford Honours School, and students working for London University Degrees carried off the George Smith Studentship on more than one occasion.

The pessimistic Professor had, however, every reason to foretell failure, for the provision made in the College was certainly very meagre. As time went on and the small but somewhat distinguished handful of examination students grew, it seemed imperative to find some means of so organising the work of the Department that we could be sure of forming classes for regular students, while preserving the popular courses of lectures for the large number of women who had developed the lecture habit.

I found that other London Colleges received students holding scholarships from the Technical Education Board and reading for London Degrees. I made an application for recognition and we were approved. These scholars were all under a pledge to be teachers either in elementary or secondary schools, and they introduced a new element into our society. They had far more concentration than the untrained student, more regular habits of work, more power of dealing with essays on orthodox lines, and of mastering facts and assimilating the contents of textbooks. They were absolutely untiring in the pursuit

of knowledge ; but it was knowledge pursued with a definite end in view, and everything was discarded that had not some value for examination purposes, while that which was profitable was remembered with amazing accuracy. They could not help taking this commercial view of their work. There was so much to be done and very little time in which to do it. Their training at the London Day Training College and their University work were going on simultaneously. It was a cruel rush for them, and there was no likelihood of any relief or leisure in the future, when as teachers they returned to the schools from which they had come as pupils.

Yet these were the girls who needed, more than any others, the wider outlook that hours in a library, travel, acquaintance with art and with cultivated people would have given them. They were obliged to be like horses with blinkers, looking neither to right nor left in their reading, but following the straight path that led to the examination goal. Their industry, their insatiable appetite for learning were astounding, and greatly surprised some of the dilettante young women who played at learning. Thus they acted as a very valuable tonic.

It was on the whole well that the two types should come into contact ; for the amateur, with her wider knowledge, her familiarity with standards of taste unknown to the professional, and her love of learning for its own sake, corrected the too utilitarian attitude of the over-worked student in training. I have often wondered how many of the latter who were successful in Final Honours examinations returned to teach according to their pledge, or secured exemption. I knew several who, having been placed high in the lists, were not unnaturally ambitious to be lecturers or specialist teachers in secondary schools,

and were ignorant of those personal limitations which were only too sadly apparent to us.

Comparing King's College in those days with the older University Colleges, it was clear that it had some advantages. Our students were older. They had read more and thought more than the undergraduate fresh from school, and had lived in the midst of London with its cosmopolitan life and interests. They were familiar with cultivated people in their own homes, and they brought some independent critical judgment to bear on the books they studied. Many of them had never been at school, and were either self-taught or at all events home-taught, with a keen appetite not blunted by text-books, but rather sharpened by browsing in a library. There is much truth in Ruskin's contention. 'If a girl can have access to a good library of old and classical books there need be no choosing at all. She will find what is good for her. In art keep the finest models before her . . . the truest, simplest, usefullest.'

My experience at King's College led me to think that there can be no College so full of life and corporate energy as that in which the students have been through no mill, have never ceased educating themselves or being educated, are many of them versed in the affairs of the world and acquainted with politics and with art at home and abroad, with ethics and theology, and have been swept suddenly and unexpectedly into the midst of corporate life and awakened to the joy of corporate work, ranging themselves alongside young girls eager for new experiences and for carrying further the intellectual experiments just begun in school. Certain it is that the responsiveness to each suggestion for inaugurating a new society or club was enthusiastic, and the Browning Society, Dramatic Society,

Hockey Club, Debates, Bicycling Clubs were supported with unabated vigour year after year. Nor was the initiative left to the authorities. It came from all quarters.

We were, I believe, the first Women's College to have an annual College dinner. Others had contented themselves with a *soirée* and what was contemptuously described as 'a cold buffet,' but we dined magnificently, and ended with toasts proposed and responded to in the most approved fashion, and witty enough to have deserved perpetuation. When College songs were needed they poured in, and had not the fault, common to girls' efforts, of being midway between a dirge and a hymn. In early days there was a tendency, soon crushed, to talk overmuch about '*esprit de corps*' and '*Alma Mater*,' but the prevailing note was one of exuberant jollity and wholesome enthusiasm. The administrative Staff were all still young and enjoyed boarding an omnibus with the rest of the Hockey Eleven, and playing in mud and fog under the shadow of the prison at Wormwood Scrubbs.

A non-resident College needs corporate games and societies greatly, for they offer the best chance for acquaintance to ripen into friendship, and all these should be organised by the students themselves. The number of girls who could devote time to College was of necessity comparatively small, but fortunately the most enthusiastic were also the most capable. They were fearless in expressing their views, and were ready for every enterprise.

The poverty of the College had one great advantage, though perhaps it did not appear so at the time. It was necessary to become a jack of all trades, though one clung to lecturing as being salvation from absorption in domestic details. I had to be the College accountant,

and gained most valuable business experience. I was secretary to the Council, and kept the minutes of all meetings. I saw to the household details, ordered my own dinner and entertained my visitors. Life in London meant many social claims, both from one's professional acquaintances and one's private friends. There was also the necessity of knowing all the ropes of the University and of keeping oneself in touch with educational movements.

At the beginning of my time in London my 'large' income did not allow me to do anything elaborate in the way of entertaining, but in London it is possible to be as simple as at the older Universities, and as the first-rate music Staff were always ready to help me I made the experiment of having evening At Homes once a fortnight, and continued them through the whole time I remained at King's College. They were quite informal, and offered an easy, pleasant way of seeing friends. I found later that in a provincial town such entertaining was quite out of the question, and I refused to give way there to the fashion of afternoon tea-parties with ices, liqueurs and sweetmeats, which prevailed in pre-war days. Certainly London is a happy place in which to be poor.

I inherited from my predecessor a delightful Irish secretary, who was a perpetual surprise to us all. When she wanted me for an interview, she would put her head in at the door and ask, with all solemnity, 'Are you vacant yet?' One day, in my absence, it fell to her to interview a dignitary of the Church; and, anxious to assume a stateliness suitable to the occasion, she sat at a large table and balanced herself on the edge of her chair, to appear the taller. Suddenly the chair slipped on the polished floor, and she found herself shot under the table, and

emerged on the other side, much disconcerted. When, on the eve of her resignation, I succeeded in having the name of Ladies' Department changed to Women's Department, her wrath was great at the flouting of tradition, and she exclaimed, 'I, at least, shall die a lady.'

At one time the College was the victim of a domestic upheaval. The hall porter's wife was found intoxicated on Sunday afternoon in the kitchen. The husband had gone out, explaining on his return that there was no pleasure in being at home with 'her like that.' The next day they were ejected before the hordes of students and lecturers arrived, and one young housemaid was left to us as sole domestic. It took nearly a fortnight to replenish the staff, and meantime day after day a contingent of students arrived to help us sweep and dust class-rooms at 7.30 A.M. Some of them were very ignorant, and very quaint they looked, for the fashion of that day decreed long skirts; and I remember one of the party, a dreamy, poetical girl, swishing about and getting her broom hopelessly mixed up with her train, while 'trailing clouds' of dust about with her.

There were, of course, many who attended the lectures who never read or even listened to what they were taught, but who imagined they were being miraculously fed by sitting at the intellectual board, and for these one may question whether lecture centres are anything but a 'snare and a delusion.' I suppose that the University Extension movement is responsible for having implanted among women, and in a lesser degree among men, the lecture habit. In the endeavour to spread culture through the country Oxford and Cambridge sent out their lecturers on History and Literature, Archæology and Economics to provincial towns and even small villages, in fact wherever

a sufficient body of so-called students could be found to provide the necessary fees. The lecturers were carefully chosen. Their matter was sound ; their manner for the most part attractive. They treated their audiences as seriously as the audiences took themselves. The lectures did not tax too greatly the attention or the intelligence, but yet had the hall-mark of the University and were followed by discussions and papers, in which the lecturers rained words of approval and encouragement on a thirsty land.

Thus the lecture habit was formed, and the classes became immensely popular and provided new subjects for conversation. It was not essential that the members of the class should prepare. They might indeed read a few poems, or a little history, but the lectures, though intended as a sauce more than as nourishment, were often the only intellectual food which the patient would take. Here we may distinguish between the function of such lectures and those which served as part of the preparation of a student at the older Universities. The latter were always supplementary to the student's own reading directed by a tutor, and being as a rule highly specialised made a demand on the student's intelligence, and were probably useless, if not unintelligible, without adequate reading from week to week.

The lecture habit, like the drug habit, is vicious if it soothes and satisfies, and leaves people content with inaction, while they indulge in pleasant illusions as to being educated, and only half grasp what they hear. It is both pathetic and ridiculous to see women rushing from lecture to lecture, equally ready to hear about architecture, poetry, philosophy, psycho-analysis or Einstein's theory, so long as they do not miss what others are talking about or fail to be conversant with the newest theories.

It is time that this danger of playing with learning were recognised, for so lucrative is the lecturer's work that it may easily become a temptation to pander to this absurd passion of the public for skimming the cream of literature and amassing knowledge by merely attending lectures. We condemn the cheap papers, with their snippets of information and sensational headlines, meant to attract the populace, but we may deserve the same condemnation for offering to a different public an education which is to be obtained without any personal effort.

One of my students at King's College being asked to write an essay in the style of Addison, contributed the following amusing sketch illustrating this tendency to the lecture habit :

'I am in the habit of spending much of my time at the Ladies' Department of King's College. The aim of this establishment is to encourage the love of learning among the fair members of society; and I confess it gives me secret satisfaction, and in some measure gratifies my vanity, as I am a woman, to see the sex enjoying here many of the privileges which were lately possessed exclusively by men. In this building every woman may find some occupation suited to her taste: she may give her mornings to the study of Philosophy, History, or Literature; and her afternoons to Science and Art; if she be not of too attentive a disposition she may sometimes have the opportunity of studying two subjects, given in adjoining rooms, at the same time. Personally I have found this to be a bad plan, as I have seldom had occasion for both courses; but should any pupil desire to cultivate many branches of learning, I would recommend this method to her, as it saves much time.

'There are ladies who frequent this building who have no desire to become blue-stockings, but who wish to study the characteristics of their sex. I have observed these ladies frequently carry large note-books to the lectures they honour

with their presence, though they do not take many notes. In this way they differ from the learned class, who bring minute note-books, and cover every available space with curious hieroglyphics, insomuch that they are often not able to read them themselves, and this I take to be characteristic of the sex, which loves to make the most simple facts appear obscure.'

There was no difficulty about discipline in the College, though there was inflammable material in the Art School—a set of wild but very attractive students, many of them daughters of artists in and around Kensington; and Byam Shaw, their delightful teacher in the Life School, did not consider it any part of his duty to keep them in order, except when teaching them. There was a whitewashed basement room leading to the Life Studio, which offered an irresistible temptation to the caricaturist, and one morning the walls were covered with portraits of King's College celebrities. The artists were summoned to appear, and at once gave themselves up to justice. We had an amicable difference of opinion as to the value or vulgarity of the collection of pictures and the need of redecorating the room at the students' expense. At last a happy idea struck me. 'Since my view differs from yours, let us have an umpire. To-morrow happens to be the day on which the Council meets. I will bring the members down to judge the matter, or, if you prefer it, the pictures can be removed to-day.' The artists begged to be allowed to clean the walls forthwith, and we all remained excellent friends. I am always struck by the 'sweet reasonableness' of rebels if not handled roughly. Girls, like boys, are content with a ruler who may be a 'beast,' if only she is a just beast.

The College boasted many distinguished and delightful

men among its professors and lecturers, and our only regret at Kensington was that we saw many of them as 'ships that pass in the night,' for they disappeared as soon as their weekly lectures were over. There was Professor Shuttleworth—breezy, charming, and enjoying, and even cultivating, his popularity in the most frank way; and Canon Beeching, with his fascinating stammer, used so skilfully that it added to the delight of his *bons mots* to have to wait for them. I can hear him in a lecture on seventeenth-century lyrists: 'H-Herrick is a kind of ep-pitome of D-Devonshire; he is just like c-clotted c-cream.' I asked him once to continue Thackeray's Lectures on the English Humorists, but he declared himself quite incapable, and assured me that the criticisms that were so delicate and appeared deliciously spontaneous were carefully thought out and prepared. I wonder! I only wish that I had more of his letters, which were quite as delightful as his lectures, and more revealing than his conversations. Here are two extracts:

'Dear Miss Faithfull. —The Principal sought to sweeten his proffered bolus by suggesting that I should give you the lectures I gave for him last term. They were on "the religious and moral ideas of Shakespeare." As a matter of fact they were given in the dinner hour. I made them as light and digestible as I could, with a great deal of reading from the plays. They were in no sense orations. If you think this sauce for the gander will be sauce for the goose, let it be so.'

The second extract was in answer to a request of mine to be allowed to read over one of his sermons which I had heard.

'I fear you will find the perusal disappointing, as lacking the human voice. Whenever people have borrowed a sermon they heard preached, they have always said something like: "I suppose this is only the outline of what you said," or "you filled in a good deal in delivery"; whereas the padding was

only the voice and the surplice and the rest of the congregation.'

Canon Ainger, who lectured occasionally, also wrote delightful letters. The following referred to a lecture on Chaucer promised to us :

'I am quite prepared to find that Chaucer is not a subject to conjure with, as too many of our fellow creatures regard him as a promising poet and rather a phenomenon (who did not know how to spell) in a barbarous age. But we shall see.'

As time went on we found that while it was possible by enlarging the Staff to provide at Kensington for the full course in Arts, it was not possible to equip laboratories with the very slender means at our disposal ; for although we were encouraged by excellent reports from Treasury Commissioners, yet as a department of a College we could not get an independent grant. A cleavage took place, therefore, between the Arts and Science students, the latter being admitted to the excellent laboratories at King's College, Strand. This migration of students actually occurred after I had left, but it was foreshadowed when the idea of a new departure was conceived by one or two members of the Council--the possibility of securing a Degree for women in the subject which of all others belonged exclusively to them.

A small group of enthusiasts held meetings as early as the year 1906 to consider the question of the 'higher education of women in the principles underlying the proper management of the home and young children, and in the hygienic and business-like conduct of institutional life.' The lectures were adapted to the needs of women wishing to prepare themselves for governing wisely their own homes, or for taking up professional work such as that of inspectors or lecturers on Domestic Science and Hygiene.

Hitherto the education in Domestic Science had been mainly technical, and it was the intention of the new movement to 'provide a scientific education in the principles underlying the organisation of home life, the conduct of institutions, and other spheres of civil and social work in which these principles are to be applied.'

There seemed no reason why men should be able to take a Degree in the special study which they required for their future work in life, such as agriculture or engineering, and women be debarred from obtaining the same recognition after pursuing an ordered course of study of a University standard, specially designed to fit them for the work in life which most often falls to their share. Furthermore, a more rational treatment of the problems of the home was urgently demanded, and it was hoped that encouragement would be given to research in Chemistry, Bacteriology and other sciences which would prove of very real value.

This scheme appealed to many who had had some doubt about the wisdom of University education for women in Classics or Mathematics. It found also generous donors to provide buildings; and very soon a fine hostel, laboratories and teaching kitchens on Campden Hill took the place of the old shabby, inconvenient, but much-loved College in Kensington Square, and the Household and Social Science Department of King's College came into being. After much deliberation it was decided that the new College should be exclusively devoted to the new courses of work, and that the students taking an Arts course at Kensington should in future work at the parent College. So another fundamental change took place, by which King's College, Strand, became entirely co-educational, and the Kensington Department as we had known it received its death-warrant.

CHAPTER VIII

CHELTENHAM LADIES' COLLEGE: EARLY DAYS AND IMPRESSIONS

'I know not how it is with you.

I love the first and last,

The whole field of the present view,

The whole flow of the past.'

R. L. STEVENSON.

CHAPTER VIII

CHELTENHAM: EARLY DAYS AND IMPRESSIONS

IN the year 1906 it happened that several posts of educational importance were vacant, and among these the headship of the Cheltenham Ladies' College.

Of the pioneers in girls' education Miss Beale had outlived her contemporaries, and to the end of her life Cheltenham had continued to grow and flourish. Old as she was, her vigour remained to the last. She controlled the whole of the vast machine, and deafness was the only severe handicap from which she suffered. In her own world of the College it was as impossible to conceive life without her as it was for England to realise the country without Queen Victoria's guiding hand.

There were indeed many points of likeness between the ruler of the Cheltenham Ladies' College and the late Queen, the same tenacity of purpose, the same strong sense of duty and unwearying devotion to the work to which each had consecrated her life, the same sense of vocation and the same indifference to public approval. These were the characteristics which, together with others to be noted later, made Miss Beale so potent an influence on the womanhood of England.

I had never met her, nor had I ever seen the College, and only knew of its educational work through some of its pupils who had become my students, and I confess that I

shared the somewhat common view that Cheltenham had a very good opinion of itself, and adopted a supercilious attitude towards other schools.

But no one had ever doubted the force of Miss Beale's personality, nor could one fail to be profoundly impressed by the fact that a woman—a Headmistress—should be given, without question, a burial in Gloucester Cathedral and a Memorial Service in St. Paul's. I attended the latter as the official representative of King's College, and I shall never forget the amazing sight of the crowd of women gathered together under the Dome.

It was not, however, merely the number of people nor the dignity of the service which was impressive, but rather the fact that in that vast congregation every woman seemed a mourner. The majority of them had not come as a mark of respect to a great woman, but from a feeling of deep affection and with a sense of personal loss. Yet this gathering was only a small part of the mourners, for the more intimate friends, two thousand in all, including pupils, were attending the service in Gloucester Cathedral at the same hour.

The sermon at St. Paul's was preached by Dr. Lang, the present Archbishop of York, and it is strange to me to remember the words in which he spoke of the future: 'We shall surely pray to-day that a double portion of her spirit may fall upon the one who may be called upon to take her place.' Certainly no one present realised less than I did the possibility of those words applying to herself, and in the following weeks the thought of Cheltenham never crossed my mind. Just before Christmas the idea of becoming a candidate was suggested to me, and scouted on the ground that I had had no experience of school life and teaching, except for my year at the Oxford High School. My experience of Colleges had been varied and

long, but I hardly knew enough of Cheltenham even to realise that it had, in addition to schoolgirls, a considerable number of students reading for the London University Degrees.

In consequence of pressure from friends, however, I went so far as to write for particulars of the post, and on one memorable January day went down to see the College. I was so happy in London life and King's College work that I was not inclined to enjoy the prospect of any change, and as we went round the immense building in the gloom of that Saturday afternoon, passing from empty class-room to empty class-room, and from laboratories to halls, only tenanted by charwomen cleaning, my spirits fell to zero; and I refused to be cheered by my companion, who assured me that all was utterly different when alive with children in the working hours.

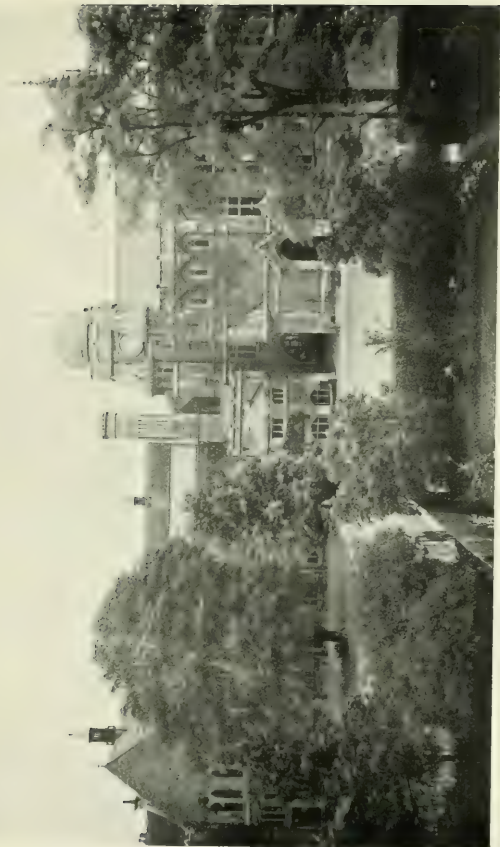
The Principal's house, which was in the centre of the building, surrounded by class-rooms, added to my melancholy. To Miss Beale it had meant everything to live in the midst of her work, and the fact that from her drawing-room there was no outlook except on a street, and from her dining-room on a corridor, did not affect her at all. Even her midday meal was always served on a tray in her office and despatched as quickly as might be.

I went back to London full of depression, but for various reasons decided to become a candidate for the post of Principal. I knew that the King's College work was within one's grasp, and, as surely, that Cheltenham would prove a Herculean labour.

Then came the day of the election, and I record this in detail because the procedure was so entirely different from anything I had known previously, or of which I have ever heard. The preliminaries were the same as in other

elections, the candidates lunching together and being interviewed alphabetically. My interview lasted about ten minutes. I do not remember the questions asked, but I was conscious of a large number of people in a big room, sitting round a long table, and of an atmosphere pervading the room such as I had never known before. There was no curiosity, no levity, but great dignity and seriousness; and when I was summoned the second time, it was as if I had entered a church full of silent prayer. As the chairman appointed me, it seemed to me that I was ordained to a high and holy office, not merely elected to an important post. That indeed was the point of view of the Council, and the idea of her work which Miss Beale herself held.

There were still several months before I was to take up my work at Cheltenham, but a few weeks after the appointment I paid a visit to the College to be introduced to the Council and Staff. It was a somewhat formidable but also very humorous affair. I had prepared for it by trying to learn the names and offices of the Staff, and had played the same game of slips of cardboard as I have already described as used for the learning of French idioms in my youth. I had become in a week or two well posted, and was desperately disappointed when at the At Home in the great Hall the Staff were arranged in a procession, and were barely allowed time to shake hands on their introduction to me. There had been some searchings of heart on the question of precedence, and one member of the group remarked, 'We ought to have brought our birth certificates.' As each was presented I just managed to blurt out my new-found knowledge, much to their surprise, in this way: 'Oh, you are Miss Leonard, the Head of Mathematics? Miss Draper, the Head of Roderic House, I think?' and so on. It seemed to them almost uncanny,



Photos. by Paul Fripp

CHELTENHAM LADIES' COLLEGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S HOUSE.

and I gained a reputation for memory which was hardly deserved. It was long before I confessed to my Pelman game.

I was glad, a little later on, to visit the College incognita, and arranged that I should be allowed to go in and out as I pleased and without any official obligations. This gave me an opportunity of watching and reflecting, which was invaluable. I watched without exerting critical faculties, but trying rather to feel the atmosphere and realise the life. It appeared to me to be a place of busy leisure and leisurely business. There was no hurrying about, nor any feeling of unrest which marks many schools. There was a great sense of purpose. Tiny children were to be seen walking independently, without any supervision, and no one thought of challenging them, being sure they were about their business as much as we were about ours. The long corridors and big halls seemed to encourage a sense of dignity and repose, and I was struck by the bearing of most of the girls.

There was no ringing of bells nor striking of clocks in the vast building, and I guessed later that this was part of a protest which Miss Beale constantly made against weakening any one's sense of individual responsibility or having the disturbance of noise in the midst of work. In truth, it is not only the noise we hear which is a disturbing element, but the noise we fear, and her aim in the College had been to destroy all possibility of interference with concentration for the few hours in which we all worked together.

During my week's visit of observation I came to the conclusion that behind all the practices of a school, which was obviously unique, lay the mind of a very thoughtful, wise and independent woman, and I resolved that it would be common sense to carry on the work on the same lines

for at least a year, making few changes, doing what my predecessor had done, and learning in the doing why she had done it. Moreover, all the parts of a great machine are interdependent, and one part cannot be touched without affecting the whole. It seemed to me, therefore, needful to view the entire structure before tampering with any portion of it.

One of the deepest impressions made on me was that the College was a place full of extraordinary achievement and extraordinary possibilities, and I never lost this feeling throughout my fifteen years' work at Cheltenham. I know nothing more stimulating to a newcomer. It was easy also to realise that a spirit of happiness pervaded the College, and I can imagine nothing more refreshing as one grows older than to work in the midst of a swarm of children, eager and enjoying. There was no question that they loved the life, and the memory of that grim January day of my first visit was soon to be wiped out. Indeed, one 'could not but be gay in such a jocund company.' I remember showing a visitor the building one day when working hours were over, and she suddenly stopped in the empty corridor and said, 'This place is full of love and happiness; I can feel it.' It was quite true. Generations of pupils had poured their passionate love into it, and it was something that could be felt.

I can only recall one desperately homesick child in all my time at Cheltenham, who for three days refused to be comforted and was finally sent to me to be dealt with. I asked her if every one was kind to her. 'Yes, very kind, but I want my mother.' I pointed out that as her mother was on the high seas it was useless to cry for her. The child admitted that every one around

her was happy, but thought it heartless of them when separated from their mothers. In despair I finally said, 'Either you are ill or you soon will be from crying, and if you cannot pull yourself together during to-day, you must go to the sanatorium and have a doctor, and after a few weeks there we can see about sending you home.' In the evening I received a note from the Housemistress: 'D. M. came home to lunch and had two helpings of suet pudding, and has never cried since.' Four years later the same girl came to me to ask that I would plead with her people for another year at College.

But to return from this digression. I went back to London looking forward to my post for the first time, though desperately alarmed; so alarmed indeed that I came to the conclusion it was more than likely I should fail. However, it did not matter much if this happened, as long as one did not hinder the work. I never lost this sense of the possibility of failure, and I am sure that it is well to face it and refuse to fear it, for so only does one act freely and make one's decisions without any regard for consequences to oneself.

One of the greatest conquests Miss Beale made was the conquest of her successor. I had shared some prejudice that was rife in the outside world, but one could not see the results of her work in the school that she had created, and the spirit with which she had endowed it, without recognising her greatness. The longer I remained the more full of admiration I became.

In September 1907 I took up the reins of government. It had been customary on the first day of term to open with prayers and an address from the Principal, and I found myself at nine o'clock on the great platform facing an audience of upwards of two thousand people. Curiosity

was keen in the town. It had known no other Principal than Miss Beale, and the whole College belonged, in a rather intimate way, to the townspeople. There was a queue from a very early hour in the morning, and a positive stampede when the doors were opened.

I shall never forget the sight, nor the appalling sense of loneliness which overwhelmed me with the recognition of the ordeal which lay before me. The wonder of that daily gathering in the Hall for prayers never quite departed: the utter stillness; the tense, expectant silence; the great company of girls, all so healthy looking, so unspoilt, so fresh and untouched by the storm and stress of life, eager to know, and, above all, so full of possibilities. That was the thought which made visitors who were accustomed to large audiences, and practised speakers like the Archbishop of Canterbury and Sir George Parkin, feel something special about the College audience, something embarrassing and overwhelming. What an opportunity, what a power lay there for the future, they said.

Fortunately there was not much time to think or feel on that first morning; one had to act and learn. All day long one was asked for decisions, for Miss Beale had ruled absolutely, and, although she trusted her subordinates, she kept the strings of government in her own hands. Her morning plan became mine. A large part was devoted to mark-reading in each class, and, while I resented the amount of time which it absorbed, I adhered to my resolve to make no change for the time being. Each girl stood as her marks were scrutinised, and reasons were given for failure in this or that subject. It took some months to find out all that lay behind this system. For two or three minutes one's whole attention was concentrated on one girl. Both work and character were being revealed, by her

sensitiveness or callousness; and as week after week passed, it became very easy to remember where there was improvement or a falling off, and to make the child realise that one knew and cared.

Then, too, one was learning as much about the class mistress as about the pupil. If she was keen and in close touch with her class, she did not allow one to pass over any laudable effort, or forget the most negligible member. She knew if a child had had a headache which accounted for a bad piece of work, or if another was paying too much attention to games. The indifferent class mistress would be unable to give one any information, and one could see that she was quite detached from her children. At the end of the second term I decided that, whatever else might go, I should never give up mark-reading, and that no other plan could have been devised to achieve so much in so short a time.

I did not find it necessary to read marks in all the upper forms weekly, and the plan adopted was as follows. Each week I went to the Junior School, where one learnt to know the little ones, and frequent inspections were valuable. The Middle School also had weekly mark-readings as a rule, but once a fortnight was sufficient to keep touch of the elder girls in the Upper School, and half-term reports took the place of marks in Post School classes and examination forms. The time occupied daily would vary from one to one and a quarter hours. In my absence the Vice-Principal or Head of the Division read marks, and gained valuable insight into the work and characters of the children.

I had made up my mind that with such large numbers it would be wise not to attempt to master even the names of the senior girls who would be leaving in a year or so, but to concentrate rather upon the younger children. Know-

ing them proved to be easier than I had thought possible. Small children are far less self-conscious than girls of fifteen and sixteen, are friendly and singularly honest in expressing their views, altogether self-revealing. If one has made friends at an early stage it is not difficult to maintain it, but it is very hard to make one's way through the barriers set up later on almost unconsciously.

I had been for many years President of the All England Women's Hockey Association, and this was a far greater passport to the approval of the girls than any other honour I could have had. No doubt they were disappointed that my time and attention were not more exclusively devoted to athletics!

Each week it was the custom for the whole of the Upper School to come to the Principal for a lecture, and I decided to give up this time for a talk on current events, school ethics, or incidents in school life during the week; in fact, I took any topic which might furnish the audience with some subject to discuss, some problem to think out, or some debatable matter about which to argue. As the numbers present were too large for any general talk, the girls were encouraged to send me their point of view in signed or unsigned letters, and these were read aloud and criticised the following week.

The subjects would be frequently suggested by the girls. Their interest never seemed to flag, whether the talk was on religion, politics, art, manners or ethics, and I possess a mass of letters on all kinds of subjects, showing in a unique fashion the mind of an English schoolgirl. The fact that it was the custom to write anonymously gave them courage to express themselves openly, and prevented those who might have enjoyed publicity from having it.

Sometimes one reckoned without one's host, and the

effect of one's admonitions proved the reverse of what had been intended. During the years following on the war the use of slang increased to an alarming extent. It was both silly and inappropriate for girls at school to be using words and phrases that belonged to the life of the trenches, and I collected these slang terms and made a story embodying them, which I hoped would impress the girls with the absurdity of such expressions as 'poshy nosh.' We had an amusing Saturday talk, but I was horrified to hear that some of the girls declared they had never learnt so much new slang as on that day! I had actually added to their undesirable vocabulary!

No relations could have been more natural and delightful than those existing between Principal and girls, and equally between Staff and pupils in the College. There was complete confidence, and a conviction among the children that the authorities were their friends and to be applied to for help and advice, but there was also a respect that prevented anything approaching impertinence. A geography teacher was amused, on leaving the Junior School after a lesson, to have a little hand slipped into hers and a tiny child murmuring, 'Beautiful geography, beautiful geography.' Could anything be more delightful than such an unsolicited testimonial?

We had rebels, but no rudeness; and rebels are usually easy to deal with, and as a rule are most attractive. They are leaders by nature, full of enterprise and independence, open to reason, often having ideas which are quite valuable, and sometimes offering a point of view which may have escaped their rulers. I suggested to one girl, a delightful rebel, who had proved refractory in House and College, that it might be better to find another school more to her own or her parents' liking. 'But I couldn't leave College,'

she burst out, 'I simply adore it.' I explained that the rules would not be altered to suit her, neither added to nor reduced, nor would I have them ignored, and there was no further difficulty.

There is another type of rebel, fortunately rare—the rebel who is too lazy in mind and body to obey, and who is a confirmed grumbler and malcontent, spreading a spirit of dissatisfaction. She is a poison spot in the body politic who had better be speedily removed.

I am convinced that in all matters of discipline in a large school it is of the first importance that one should be in close touch with the girls, ready to hear their opinions through the prefects, and keeping one's finger, as it were, on the pulse of the school, and so be able to prevent anything like gang discontent or disorder. It is never impossible to deal with individuals, but if a body of some fifty or sixty members of a College choose to combine against authority, it means either concessions and compromises, which weaken one's power, or drastic action, which is likely to become public and damage, albeit unfairly, the prestige of the school. I believe that the Head of a school should always be accessible to her large family. I never found the privilege abused. Notes could be laid on my desk, and time would be found sooner or later for a talk.

I made also other opportunities of coming into touch. The prefects came to me each Sunday, and we read poetry and talked of any College matters that needed attention. They regarded their work very seriously, and, to encourage that view, they were elected with as much pomp and circumstance as a member of Parliament, their responsibilities explained to them, and a special service held in the oratory when they entered on their office.

The size of Cheltenham has often been attacked. It

has been said that girls need special individual attention, and that any one child must be lost in such a multitude. If this were true it would be a very severe indictment, and I cannot conceive that Miss Beale, who cared primarily, as I did, for the development of character, would have allowed the College to grow to such very large proportions had there been such a danger. As a matter of fact I found, as many parents have found, that the individual care bestowed on each girl was one of the most striking characteristics of the College.

This was effected by careful organisation of the Staff. First, there were mistresses in charge of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Schools, who were known as Heads of Divisions, responsible for knowing the children within their group. Then there were the class teachers, or form mistresses, with their smaller body of about twenty-five children, in touch with them daily, and in close touch with the house-mistresses, whose intimate knowledge of the house life supplemented and often corrected the School estimate. Further, there were the teachers of special subjects, who reported to the class teacher any matters concerning a pupil that might need attention.

The large numbers in the College enabled me to introduce special classification of pupils and variant curricula for different mental types, which would have been impossible in a smaller school. There were groups of classes in which more Mathematics and Science were taken, while in others more time was devoted to English, History and Languages. Again, it was possible not only to keep backward children together to work at their own speed, but to teach them only such subjects as were suitable to their ability and likely to arouse interest and encourage development. There were three well-defined types of classes, and, further, in

order to secure that the children were always working with those of their own level of ability and proficiency, they were regrouped in 'sets' for Mathematics, Classics and Modern Languages, subjects in which those of the same age are often at very different stages of knowledge. It is obvious that this system is only possible in a big school, as it necessitates a large staff of teachers in each subject, since, for example, the whole of the upper part of the Middle School must have French lessons simultaneously in order that each girl may be drafted to the set for which she is fitted.

I instituted the same system of grading in games, and it proved to be an unqualified success. It seemed to me that the first and second College and House Elevens absorbed the attention of the games mistresses too much, to the exclusion of the training of the rank and file, and I fancy this tends to be the case in most schools, whether boys' or girls'. We wanted a general interest to be encouraged, and the general standard of play to be raised throughout the College. It was most important that every girl should receive careful instruction in the science of the various games and be prevented from getting into bad habits. The players were therefore graded on entering College, so that those of the same standard of knowledge and capacity played together and were coached together. Special care was taken with the training of the younger children, and the Junior grade was entrusted to the most expert teacher. At first I think she accepted it as a self-denying ordinance. But by the end of the first session such good material had been found among the Juniors and such rapid progress made by them, that there was some competition among the coaches for the pleasure of teaching them.

Obviously it is more economical in time and labour to discover talent early and train it aright, so that practice may be left to do the rest, rather than to concentrate on correcting faults later, and improving those who are already above the average.

Another argument to be urged in favour of the large school is that the girls do not move up *en bloc* each year, which is unavoidable in a small school with few forms, but are drafted to different classes and thus have fresh companionship, which often proves a valuable stimulus.

There was no doubt that the size of the College, the number of the Staff and the variety of interests made life fuller and more interesting to the mistresses than it might have been in a smaller school, and prevented the desire for change. There was also plenty of opportunity of promotion within the College. It was possible to rise from being a class teacher to be Head of a Division, or Head of a Subject, or even Vice-Principal; and sometimes in old days, when paper credentials were non-existent, I have been told that a teacher would change her subject and find fresh life and inspiration by so doing. It was also an attraction to the Staff to have an opportunity of lecturing to the University students as a change from class teaching and elementary work, and, as far as possible, the University work was distributed among the senior members of the Staff.

The spirit throughout the College, as I found it, was one of strong personal responsibility, combined with a love of the place and its traditions that made it a matter of course to put its claims for service before all else. One of the old Staff has described to me Miss Beale's way of dealing with the teachers. She saw in them, or thought she saw, greater possibilities than they had ever dreamed of, and inspired them with a belief in themselves and an intense

desire to vindicate her faith in them. She expected a willing sacrifice of time and devoted service on behalf of the College. She grudged no labour for it herself, and I found them imbued with the feeling that its demands on them were paramount. So they gave themselves freely and most generously to their pupils, in a way that certainly could not be estimated in pounds, shillings and pence. They reaped their reward in the affection of the girls for them, and in their turn required great things of their pupils. It was made quite clear that details were not to be thought negligible, nor standards of conduct to be considered lightly.

The younger generation of teachers finds it hard to share this spirit. The early mistresses had been bred and trained in one place; in many cases, passing from pupil to student and student to teacher. They had the vocational attitude towards their work rather than the professional. Times have changed, and now a mistress feels it is not desirable to stay too long in any place, and many pass on so quickly in the wish to gain variety of experience that they can hardly know their pupils in any intimate way, or grasp the life and spirit of a place before they have ceased to belong to it.

It is not as easy to get to know members of the Staff in a big school as in a small one. We numbered in all nearly a hundred. General social gatherings were useless, and one was too tired to be able to entertain continually during term time. The Staff, too, were tired when the day's work was over, and it was probably better for them to change the school atmosphere altogether. I often felt ashamed of my sins of omission, but never really reformed, and am relieved to find that many other Headmistresses fail in the same way.

Why is it more difficult for women than for men to find the way to an intellectual comradeship as colleagues? There are so few women who care to discuss problems, or have theories concerning their work, and are ready to plunge into an argument on discipline, or self-expression, or a book such as *Sanderson of Oundle*. Staff meetings were apt to become merely hortatory and explanatory, however hard one tried to encourage expressions of opinion. Yet there was always a buzz of conversation and criticism the moment they were over, and no doubt valuable views were propounded of which I remained in complete ignorance.

The work of delegation is one in which women are supposed to fail. It was, however, imperative to delegate largely at Cheltenham, for no Principal could personally attend to the multifarious calls upon her. My ignorance of school organisation made me adopt University methods, and Boards of Studies in each subject were formed to discuss the syllabus, the choice of books, the ground to be covered in the various classes; and the result of the deliberations of the Staff was then submitted to me.

There is little difficulty in fixing the limits of departmental control. They are found wherever the action of one department affects another, or the whole institution. It is clearly impossible to permit one subject to absorb large sums of money irrespective of claims from other quarters, or to allow a child's work to be increased and the time-table altered without reference to other subjects and careful consideration of the whole of her school work. Thus it is essential that in these matters there should be a court of appeal, and that court of appeal must be the Principal. It is her duty to weigh the respective gains and losses, and to adjust matters with due regard to all the circumstances of the case with an unprejudiced mind.

When the time came to introduce new schemes or modify existing ones it was absorbingly interesting, and I hoped to find that my colleagues shared my enthusiasm for reform and fresh enterprises. I had not calculated on such vehement conservatism as I found. Perhaps the long delay in making new departures had lulled the Staff into a feeling of false security, and it was the harder to endure any interference with the old *régime*, sanctified to them by many and long associations.

The town, too, was suspicious of 'many inventions,' and my surprise and amusement were great when a letter appeared in the local press condemning the fads of the new Principal in introducing annual medical inspection for the College girls, and signed 'One of the unfaithful.' It was not long, however, before the value of this annual inspection in maintaining a high standard of health among the pupils was generally recognised. It also provided a valuable body of statistics, probably unparalleled, concerning the health of a large secondary school.

The girls, and especially the old girls, were no less conservative than the Staff. If possible they hated change more ardently, and they certainly spoke more openly. At one of my early meetings of the College Guild I recorded with some pride what I thought were improvements in the College. I had not reckoned with the storm I should raise when I explained that a room which had been used as a cloak-room for one of the Houses, and always smelt strongly of boots, had been transformed into a delightful class-room, and that we had abolished the old school exercise books with their coloured covers sprinkled with gold stars, and had thought out an entirely new scheme for the College stationery, reported to be the admiration of other schools. There was weeping and wailing, and a

procession of old girls made its way to the stationery room to buy up the remaining stock of exercise books. They returned to me with their arms full, triumphantly exclaiming, 'Our children, at least, shall do their Scripture in "black stars," and their French in "red stars."' They did not even relent when I explained to them that the sprinkling of gold stars on to coloured paper was one of the dangerous trades. Such is the force of tradition!

The new edition of the College hymn-book was the cause of another outburst of feeling on the part of the Guild. I did not have to break the news of this change to the College, as I insisted that Dr. Allen, now Sir Hugh Allen, our Musical Director, should do it. He was responsible with me for the selection of the hymns and tunes, and he was so much more drastic than I dared to be in rejecting hymns that were sentimental and non-congregational, for which girls always feel a great affection, that I finally told him that he must take it upon himself to explain the changes and convert the College. No one present will ever forget the evening on which he undertook that task. He first gave a lecture pointing out that we were not content with anything but the very best for College in every other department; why should we want to make an exception as regards its music? We must not allow our sentimentality to make us retrograde. It was easy to see, he said, how soon the new hymns would become a College possession, and mean just as much to future generations as those which were dear to us from familiarity and associations. Then some hymns were sung, first to the old tunes and afterwards to the new, and College was asked to vote upon which they liked best. At first conservatism and sentiment won the day, but as the hymns were repeated again and again the tide of feeling changed, and there

was a great turn-over of votes. I cannot conceive that any one else could have achieved this end so rapidly and so surely.

It was a sad day for the College when we lost our Director. He had given, at all events to the Principal, more trouble than any member of the Staff! Letters were unanswered, telegrams were ignored, even reply-paid ones, and hours for rehearsals were constantly changed, but whenever he came it was as though a fresh, keen, bracing wind blew through the College, invigorating every one; and we were all delighted to hear him, ignoring the silence rule, singing along the corridors. He had the power of revitalising us all.

As year followed year, and many new schemes appeared, the Staff learnt, not only to endure them heroically, but sometimes to welcome them. I remember once returning from the holidays agog with some fresh idea, and told a mistress how full of vigour I was. 'Let me go and buy a wig,' she murmured, 'my hair is already beginning to go white with your schemes!'

On the whole they suffered me and my inexperience with much kindness, and I count myself fortunate to have kept so many of the old Staff to act as a bulwark to the College. No one certainly ever had more splendid adjutants. I have much sympathy with a distrust of radical changes, and feel with Burke that we should be 'always acting as if in the presence of canonised forefathers,' and thus 'the spirit of freedom leading in itself to misrule and excess is tempered with an awful gravity.'¹

¹ *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

CHAPTER IX

CHELTENHAM LADIES' COLLEGE : DISCIPLINE AND TRADITIONS

' We tell these tales, which are strictest true,
Just by way of convincing you
How very little, since things was made,
Anything alters in any one's trade.'

RUDYARD KIPLING : ' A Truthful Song,'
Rewards and Fairies.

CHAPTER IX

CHELTENHAM: DISCIPLINE AND TRADITIONS

THE following chapters are by far the hardest to write. Time makes its own selection for memory, and determines what shall remain to form the picture of the distant past, and what shall disappear. There may be some subconscious process going on in our minds, but certain it is that in some strange way events big and small in the far past fall into a kind of shape, and make a clear and fairly complete picture. When one comes closer to the present, however, the mass of detail overwhelms one. It is hard to see the wood for the trees, to distinguish the small from the great, essentials from non-essentials, that which is of value from the trivial and absurd. There is little or no perspective, and the wealth of material is an encumbrance. It would be easy to write a thesis on boarding schools or curriculum, but this is not what I have set out to do. My aim is rather to give small pen-and-ink drawings of people and places, and reflections on the life of those places. I must keep to my business, but I feel the 'school-marm' stepping forward and haranguing from a platform all too often, and I take this opportunity of apologising for her. Like Sir James Barrie and M'Connachie, she gets the upper hand at times, and will have her way and her say.

It took some time to get accustomed to the new surroundings. I had never lived in a country town before, and was

quite unprepared for the interest taken in one's doings, and for the reports of my motor cars and magnificence, which had even preceded my arrival! In London even the nearest neighbours know nothing of each other, and are not in the least concerned with comings and goings, or surprised at any idiosyncrasies or eccentricities in those around them. One might go out without shoes or stockings, or have Royalty calling daily, and it would hardly arouse a comment.

But in Cheltenham it was very different, and one found oneself not only the 'observed of all observers,' but the subject of many 'imaginary conversations.' This was mainly due to the fame of Miss Beale, and I found that mine was largely a borrowed glory. It was all very harmless gossip. I never quite lost the sense of the ludicrous when I was treated as an Eastern potentate, and I understood why an old friend, for long holding a post in the College and realising how necessary it was to endow me with more dignity than I naturally possessed, implored me quite seriously to wear always sumptuous dresses of *moiré antique*, and to rustle along the corridors! She wanted me to create an impression, but I entirely failed.

Cheltenham has suffered from an evil reputation for its climate. It is true that it lies in a hollow surrounded by hills, and it has even been said that 'the air was poured into Cheltenham at the Creation and has been going round and round ever since,' but the nearness of its hills is its redeeming point. In half an hour one can be on the Cotswolds, a thousand feet up, far away from buildings, in the midst of the most beautiful scenery of England.

It is strange that to so many country lovers Gloucestershire and its beauties are a sealed book. Yet the glories

of the Cotswolds have been sung by many a poet—John Drinkwater, F. W. Harvey, Wilfrid Gibson, James Elroy Flecker and others. Nowhere can be found such beautiful old stone cottages, or more perfect villages than Bibury and Sapperton, nestling in the folds of the hills. They look indeed as if they had grown out of the soil, so truly are they in harmony with the landscape. Nowhere in England can you find more beautiful tracts of rolling upland than above Andoversford, or more alluring valleys than the Windrush, or the Colne; nor are there finer distant views to be seen than from Birdlip or Cleeve.

It is said that one of the great advantages of London is the ease with which you can get away from it, and the same may be said of Cheltenham. Nevertheless the town is beautiful in itself, unique with its avenues of trees, and the Promenade is one of the most foreign and attractive streets in England; it is, moreover, in the centre of loveliness, with Broadway and Evesham to the north, and Stroud and Cirencester to the south.

The College record of health was so good that it should have done much to dispel all fears as to the Cheltenham climate. Again and again the Medical Inspector commented upon the physique of the girls and their vigorous health. During fifteen years we had no serious epidemic, and only two deaths among the very large body of pupils. Infectious diseases appeared each term, but for the most part we had a mere handful of cases.

I do not think that normal children of school age are very susceptible to climate, and the healthy conditions of their regular life, wholesome food, airy rooms, and plenty of exercise in games and gymnasium, more than compensate for a place being relaxing. It is we elders who are far more dependent on the help to be got from a bracing

climate, and as our physical activities diminish it becomes more and more essential.

During my later years at Cheltenham I built myself a cottage six miles away on the Cotswolds, and it became a haven of rest and refreshment for me and many of my colleagues and friends. I have gone up to it so tired that I longed only for bed, and have found myself within an hour, having utterly forgotten my weariness, sitting down to write a lecture. It has had the honour of being described in the beautiful lines called *The Midlands* by John Drinkwater :

‘Black in the summer night my Cotswold hill
Aslant my window sleeps, beneath a sky
Deep as the bedded violets that fill
March woods with dusky passion. As I lie
Abed between cool walls I watch the host
Of the slow stars lit over Gloucester plain,
And drowsily the habit of these most
Beloved of English lands moves in my brain,
While silence holds dominion of the dark,
Save when the foxes from the spinneys bark.

‘I see the valleys in their morning mist
Wreathed under limpid hills in moving light,
Happy with many a yeoman melodist ;
I see the little roads of twinkling white
Busy with fieldward teams and market gear
Of rosy men, cloth gaitered, who can tell
The many minded changes of the year,
Who know why crops and kine fare ill or well ;
I see the sun persuade the mist away,
Till town and stead are shining to the day.’ . . .

If it is possible to choose one's abode as a working woman, I believe that in the interests of one's work and health the ideal plan is to live habitually ‘over the shop,’

but to have a retreat to which one can fly for week-ends and as an occasional city of refuge, not to be reached by those who would pursue either by tram or telephone, but only by an expensive taxi. I tried for some years living at a distance of fifteen minutes' walk from the College. It was not near enough to save one the discomfort of rainy nights, when there were evening functions to attend, nor was it far enough to protect one from the importunate parent, or business caller. There was no sense of security, and a telephone call would bring one back to the office at most unlicensed hours. When I was established within the College precincts, it is true that my house was fitly named Clapham Junction, but there was immense satisfaction in despatching urgent claims at once, and having the knowledge of the Delectable Mountains waiting for one.

The first two years at Cheltenham were occupied mainly in mastering the complex organisation, and realising the adjustments of the various parts. The middle period of one's term of office is the time for developments and new institutions, and the latter part should, I think, be devoted more to establishing that which has been created—not planting, but watering and fertilising—and one may well spend some time in reviewing the results of labours and in pruning and tending. As years go on the philosopher should be born in each of us, and the philosopher has a contribution to give to work no less important than the inventor or the engineer and mechanic. The value of driving force is immense. Like faith it will 'remove mountains'; indeed, faith, or conviction, is its chief ingredient; but there is a danger lest its constant exercise wear out both driver and those driven. It is costly to expend vital energy continually, and unless the tendency

to do so is controlled, it destroys those who have the precious gift of an abundant supply of the *élan vital*. It is indeed the pace that kills, but if a period of reflection can succeed action there need be no sudden exhaustion such as terminated so tragically the lives of Dr. Sanderson and others fashioned in the same mould.

The main block of the College buildings was situated near the centre of the town, consisting of halls, library, class-rooms, laboratories and offices. The playing fields were at a distance, and the fourteen boarding-houses, with one exception, had not been built for the purpose, but were, for the most part, old Georgian houses which had been bought by the Council as occasion arose. They were in different parts of the town and of varying sizes, the numbers in each ranging from twenty-five to fifty. I am inclined to think that from all points of view—supervision, individual attention, the development of corporate spirit, and finance—the ideal number for a school boarding-house is from thirty to forty. It is difficult to decide as to the merits of a Junior House, in which all boarders under twelve can be congregated. It would, I feel sure, be best that no girl should leave home until the age of twelve, but there are cases when the parents are abroad, or the mother is dead, and small children must go to a boarding school. If they are in a separate house, the arrangements for meals, hours of going to bed, work and play, can be more easily adapted to their needs, but the elder girls miss the care and pleasure of small children among them, and the little ones may gain much from their elders. The question of segregation is a debatable point.

Of the fourteen houses St. Hilda's was intended as a hall of residence for senior students reading for a Degree or taking a Post School course in the College. It was

founded in 1885, and was originally meant for students training as teachers, of whom twenty were received at very low fees as foundationers. The building held fifty students, and the life was more independent than the ordinary boarding-house life. Students were thus prepared for the freedom which would be theirs when they went out into the world.

The number of boarders in the College quite outstripped the number of day-girls. The Heads of the boarding-houses had no part in teaching, and in this the College plan differed from that adopted by most schools of the same type. It was felt that the boarding-house should be as far as possible a home, and that for this reason the children after their morning's work should have a change from the atmosphere of school, and their little faults in class should not follow them home. The Head of the boarding-house was not chosen for her academic qualifications, but for her powers of ordering a household and mothering children. On the whole I believe that this was a sound policy.

Great freedom was given to the Heads of Houses in the ordering of their households, and the House rules, meals and general organisation were not, therefore, all on the same pattern. In this way the Houses, while all conforming to College laws and ordinances, had marked individuality. It depended in some measure on the Head whether there was great interest taken in games, or whether politics and social questions were discussed. In some a considerable amount of self-government was encouraged, while in others there was a more maternal supervision. In general, a girl thought her own House vastly superior to all others, and this was the case even when permission to have sweets was denied and hampers were forbidden, or when over-great

anxiety concerning colds prescribed that mackintoshes should be carried even in brilliant sunshine. Such peculiarities were part of the House, and to be defended as such against all outside critics, though they might be severely denounced within its walls. There was the same feeling as that which prompts defence of parents to the world at large, however unreasonable they may seem to their children.

The chief difficulties in House government arose when any change of Head took place. Reforms, here as elsewhere, introduced by a newcomer, even though they might have been welcomed under the old *régime*, appeared to the girls to demand opposition out of loyalty to the past; and from time to time I was appealed to when disturbances occurred. But it is well to leave all such commotions to settle themselves, if possible, and only to intervene if the situation is critical. It is one's duty, I think, to uphold legitimate authority, not to substitute one's own; to advise when asked, but to remain a court of appeal in the background. The readiness to consult one is the greater when one's experience is used to help to govern, rather than to take the place of the governor. The latter course would certainly be interpreted by the girls as a confession of weakness on the part of the Head of the House.

The happiness of the girls in a boarding school is quite as dependent on the House life as on the school life, and it was truly said by the *doyenne* of our Houses that the most satisfactory girls were those who gave allegiance and love equally to House and College.

When I went to the College the numbers on the books were larger than in any previous or subsequent term. They touched one thousand, including by-students, in

the term in which Miss Beale died, and it was clear that her long reign and old age had not in any way weakened her reputation, or that of the school, which she had found almost moribund with only sixty pupils, and left the largest and one of the most vigorous schools in England. As I go over the history of the past I find that the activity of Miss Beale seemed to reach its climax in the decade from 1890 to 1900. During these years there were large additions to the College buildings, and Cowley House, Oxford, was purchased and opened as St. Hilda's Hall, precisely on the same lines as the other Oxford women's Colleges. This was Miss Beale's private venture, intended to give Cheltenham students the advantage of passing on to University life in Oxford. Thus the same strong link was forged between Cheltenham and St. Hilda's, Oxford, as between Winchester and New College.

This was not the only interesting development of the College outside Cheltenham. Every school has its Old Students' Association, formed for the purpose of maintaining the interest of the *alumnae* in the Alma Mater and for giving chances of meeting in the old surroundings and reviving school friendships; but the College Guild formed in 1883 was in some respects original, and remains to the present unique in certain features, which were indicative of the ideals of the Founder. Membership was not to be taken as a matter of course. Each pupil of the College was admitted on the nomination of a proposer and seconder from the Staff and approved by the Principal. She was received into the Guild at a special service and under definite pledges, and she was required to show that she was justifying her existence by sending in an annual report, explaining what useful work in life she was undertaking. These reports are often full of interest, and the General Secretary, who

receives, analyses and reviews them, is a mine of information on women's employments. There are in the Guild representatives of every profession and calling open to women—medicine, nursing, law, agriculture, accountancy, art, the stage, literature. May Sinclair and Ida Wylie are among the members. There are signs of an awakening interest in commerce, and we had an old student working for the degree of commerce in the University of London, another manager of a mill, and a third, an only child, preparing to qualify for partnership in her father's firm. One is partner with her husband in an antique furniture shop, and one member, an architect, adds to her report: 'The preparation, supervision, and correction of the needlework of my grandmother aged 97 occupies some time daily.' Of all the modern forms of social work, the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements appeal most strongly to the younger members of the Guild, and one girl has a company of native boys and girls in Uganda.

In reading these records one is struck by the immense amount of time occupied in Committee work, and combined with this, and consequent upon it, is much organising, lecturing and travelling. Every now and then we come across a surprisingly new occupation for women, for example 'horse-breaking.'

A married woman describes her work as 'bringing up the young of the nation,' and another mother writes simply, 'Twin baby boys, so there isn't very much time left for other subjects.'

The Guild is in fact a union of workers, and in the words of the Founder, 'they must consider themselves united to help in sustaining, especially in distant countries, as high an intellectual and social standard as possible, first among those of their own class.'

The Cheltenham Old Students' Association was indeed intended to be a Guild of Service, and very soon after its inception the Settlement of St. Hilda's in the East was started in Shoreditch. A house was built where the thieves' quarter had been cleared away, and a model workmen's town had taken its place. Most settlements have had to struggle with financial difficulties, and the wardens are obliged to spend time in begging for funds, but the main monetary responsibility of St. Hilda's has always been borne by the Guild, and a very large proportion of the workers in the last forty years have been Cheltonians.

Meetings of the Guild take place biennially, the first being held in July 1884, just forty years ago, and it now numbers some three thousand members scattered all over the world, and more than twenty branches at home and abroad, which arrange sectional meetings and keep in touch with members locally. It is a great organisation, and such an Association is a strength to any institution by linking one generation to another.

The College, as I found it, included Training Departments for Elementary, Secondary and Kindergarten teachers; a University Department, in which students worked for the Arts and Science External Degrees of the London University; the Upper, Middle and Lower Schools, and the Kindergarten. After some years the difficulty in conforming with new regulations of the Board of Education made it necessary to abandon the Training Departments, and the Elementary School maintained in the town as a practising school for the students. We established about the same time Post School courses for elder students in Art, Music, Library training and Sunday School training for organisers. It costs much to abandon old institutions,

or to accept the fact that a new invention is not meeting a need as one imagined it would ; but it is foolish to try to force on an age what it no longer wants, or to refuse to acknowledge that one has not read the signs of the times aright. The Library scheme was a great success. Our students got posts at the Bodleian, and one of them was the first woman to be employed within the sacred precincts of the Athenæum. The Sunday School training, immensely appreciated by those who took it, did not receive sufficient support from the Church to continue to exist for more than seven or eight years. Organisers in Church work must have a living wage, and though the need of reformed Sunday Schools is undoubted, the money was not forthcoming.

I found it a great advantage to have Post School courses, because it enabled me to oppose any demand on the parents' part for early specialisation. When a girl had gone through the regular school course and reached a satisfactory standard, she could devote herself to domestic science, art or music as much as her heart desired, but no precocity could induce us to allow more than a very moderate amount of time for music, or any other special study, to the neglect of a good general education. Teachers who thought they had captured a budding genius, and longed to have her to work their will upon, were more or less pacified by the promise of a Post School year; and girls who might have been removed early for that insidious and generally unsatisfactory year abroad, were often persuaded to stay on for the pleasure of a year or more of work on the subject they loved best.

The College girls were for the most part drawn from the professional class. The parents were not wealthy, but they realised the importance of education. During my term of office two marked changes occurred. After the

war the incomes of professional men were greatly reduced, and a career for their daughters became a matter of necessity. At the same time girls became more eager for an independent life. In my early years at the College I should say that seventy per cent. of the pupils had no intention of leading a working life. They were going home after school was over. Many were daughters of Indian officers or civilians, and were going to join their parents abroad. After the war certainly seventy per cent. wished to have a career. In consequence, examinations and a University education became of growing importance, and there was keener interest in school work as leading up to a desired goal. The body of occasional students, who had helped to account for the large numbers in 1906, tended to disappear. They had come for special subjects—literature, art or music—while continuing to live at home and enjoy society. They had gone off to some regular employment ; or, if not, money was not available for the luxury of singing or drawing lessons year after year. Our eight hundred students and pupils of later years represented the regular pupils of the College, whether day-girls or boarders, there being only a comparatively small number of irregular students.

I found no monotony in my work, though I regretted that as time went on there was less and less possibility of teaching. Administration is full of interest, and problems great and small meet one at every turn. Heads of institutions are often accused with justice of being autocrats, and even if they have no desire for autocracy it is forced upon them to some extent. Decisions must be made, and pressure is sometimes brought to bear upon one to make them before one is ready. Emergencies arise without a moment's warning and action must be taken. There is neither time for discussion, nor, in many cases, any human

being to whom one can appeal for help and counsel. All that can be secured is a few minutes for quiet reflection on the decision to be made, and action must be taken with a confidence that may well appear to be self-sufficiency, but most certainly is not.

In matters that admit of deliberation I believe it is the wisest policy to make full inquiries beforehand, to get ample material for judgment, and then legislate. When a conclusion is reached it is mere waste of time to allow discussion or to re-open the subject. It is perhaps difficult for the lookers-on to understand this attitude, and more than hard for them to realise that there are times when 'it is no inconsiderable part of wisdom to know how much of an evil ought to be tolerated.'¹ They often think the authorities blind when they are really vigilant and only waiting for the psychological moment to act.

The discipline of the College has sometimes been condemned as too severe, and the repression greater than is at all necessary in these days. I think this is a mistaken view. Our rules were simple and few. They had existed from early times and I saw no reason to change them, except by slight modifications. The old code remained unaltered by the wish of the seniors, and we were proud that it was so. The Prefects were among the strongest supporters of the silence rule, which was regarded sometimes by Inspectors and new Staff as a hardship and unnecessary strain on the girls. I am sure it was neither. I would defend it partly on the ground that it is our duty in organising a school to provide not only cool, airy rooms for work, and ample opportunities for vigorous physical exercise, but also quiet in which the effort of concentration may be minimised. It is extraordinary to see how soon a

¹ Edmund Burke.

habit is formed in this as in all else, and when it is acquired by the whole community each child is delivered from a disturbing conflict of desires, and finds it no harder to be silent during school hours than at prayers or at a concert.

The hours of silence were only from nine o'clock to eleven and from eleven-thirty to one o'clock, and the main difference between Cheltenham and other schools lay, I believe, in the insistence on silence between lessons, and in passing from class to class. The 'break' in the middle of the morning gave twenty minutes for talk, and leave was given before and after school if asked for; and as there was no afternoon school the only other silence hours were during preparation in the boarding-houses. Every girl, down to the child of seven or eight, was on her honour, and there was no petty supervision. It was taken for granted that rules would be kept, and breaches or evasions were rare. I met an old student of the College the other day who is teaching in a large school in an industrial centre, and asked her what she considered the most striking feature of the College as compared with other schools. She replied, without a moment's hesitation, 'The silence rule'; and added that she felt it an insult to the girls she was teaching to have to tell them to be quiet.

The girls at Cheltenham had a conviction that the self-discipline demanded was good, and that it was worth attaining. They were very proud of the order and quiet which reigned in the College. The self-control learnt was also far-reaching in its effects. There was, of course, no law against calling, or even shouting on the playing fields, but there was no inclination to be noisy, and increased concentration was noticeable in consequence. The saving of time, too, was extraordinary. Instructions were easy

to give, and they received immediate attention. This was observed again and again. We have all suffered from the gossip that goes on among the actors in amateur dramatic performances, and the difficulty of commanding a hearing and having each one alert for her work. But I have seen a Master of the Ceremonies in College arrange the complicated movements of a crowd of seven hundred girls in a pageant with the minimum of trouble and difficulty in marshalling her troops.

Each year the rules were read and explained. It was not difficult to point out that in life we must pay the price for special privileges with goodwill, that a large school could provide opportunities for friendship, the pleasures of corporate life and games, gymnasium, swimming bath and playing fields, impossible for a small school, and that the noise of hundreds of girls together was insupportable, while that of fifty might be endurable. The girls readily realised that a limitation on personal freedom was necessary, in so far as that freedom interfered with the comfort and well-being of others, and a sense of justice and reasonableness could be depended upon among them.

Of course in pursuit of an adventure rules were broken. There were midnight parties at which we should all have loved to be present, and escapades of various sorts when all restrictions went to the winds, but if punishment followed girls took it in a sporting spirit. They made no excuses. They told the truth, and they never blamed others. I remember my astonishment when one girl, a foreigner I am almost glad to say, assured me that others were just as bad as she was. It was the first and last time such a plea was made. Schoolgirls have plenty of moral courage as a rule, if they are given time, allowed always to tell their own story quietly, and are trusted to tell the truth. But

a girl, like a boy, has a passion for justice and never forgives any one who is unfair.

In connection with the demand for unlimited freedom made for, as well as by, the younger generation, I was much interested to hear lately from two girls not much over twenty, who had insisted upon having entire liberty, and had been unchecked abroad and at home for a year or two, that each had decided that under no circumstances should any girl over whom she had control have anything approaching the liberty she had insisted upon for herself. So perhaps already the swing of the pendulum in the opposite direction has begun, and the children of the future will have parents who will rule them with a rod of iron, and protect them—as the daughters now wish they had been protected—from themselves.

Early in my time at Cheltenham I had a proof of the value of self-discipline and self-control engendered by the College system. I instituted 'Foundress Day' with a view to commemorating the work of Miss Beale, and thereby securing that no generation of students should arise who would be wholly ignorant of their debt to her. The day began with a lecture on the early history of the College and the life of the Founder. This was followed by a pageant, and a fancy-dress dance in the evening, when about twelve hundred people gathered in the Princess Hall. I had determined that the girls should be entirely free from the supervision of either class or house mistress, although the Staff were afraid that in so great a crowd accidents might occur or groups of children get out of hand. As I looked down at the seething mass of dancers I confess that my heart misgave me. It is impossible to see any crowd and not realise its potential force. As I was reflecting, a member of the Staff asked if I could arrange for some set dances

belonging to the pageant to be repeated. 'How can I make myself heard above the buzz of conversation and movement?' I asked. She pointed to a small tick-bell. 'If you touch that it will be quite sufficient to produce instant silence.' I felt sceptical, but made the attempt, and as if by magic every head turned automatically to the platform and complete silence reigned. From that moment I knew that the habit of discipline would hold in work or play and in moments of excitement. In later days, when we all suffered from anxiety as to possible bombardments or invasion, the memory of that evening gave me confidence.

Habit, tradition and public opinion are great forces and can effect wonders in a school. Parents would sometimes bring to me a child for whom they apologised, as being very difficult to manage, cross-grained and irritable if thwarted, in fact one of the many who are described in the phrase familiar to every headmistress, 'She can be led, but not driven.' They were surprised that I was not more concerned, until I assured them that public opinion would do all that was necessary and I anticipated no trouble. A girl is far more sensitive to the opinion of seven hundred companions than to any rules, and she fears above all things making herself ridiculous in their eyes. So she conforms to existing uses, and fits herself into her place in the common life without difficulty. There is none of the friction that often comes from the clash of wills of two members of a family, alike yet unlike.

Once I had a girl brought to me who had run away from one school and had been sent away from another. The mother was anxious that she should enter the College, but I felt very doubtful, and not eager to let her make a third and probably unsatisfactory experiment with us. I explained that we were not accustomed to having girls either expelled

or running away, and I had no intention of taking any one likely to spread disaffection. She could only come if she herself wished to come and promised to be law-abiding. It was apparently an immense surprise to the girl, accustomed to admiration and to having her own way, to find any one unmoved by her attractions and disinclined to receive her with open arms, and she decided at once that she definitely wished to come, even on my terms. On the whole, for so rebel a spirit, she kept her pledge and enjoyed the life, and when the desire for new experiences became overwhelming she made an orderly retreat, with only one really bad mark against her.

On another occasion a mother came to me in great distress, declaring that her child, a day-girl in College, was wholly unmanageable at home, and that she wished to put her into a boarding-house. I pointed out that with the character she gave her this was impossible, and finding that the girl acknowledged that the charges made against her were justified and that she could not explain her fits of temper and unreasonableness, I made her see the Medical Inspector, suspecting, as proved to be the case, that there was something amiss with the child's health. She was put under treatment, and I had a grateful letter from the mother, who said a transformation had taken place in the child 'who wished that her past should be remembered no more!' We had no difficulty with her at College. Habit and public opinion had exercised a restraining influence greater than the parent's appeals.

There was a tradition in the College from very early times that girls did what was expected of them without question, and that no self-consciousness or nervousness could be accepted as an excuse. We had frequent concerts in which the girls played and sang to a large and critical

audience of schoolfellows, Staff and sometimes a larger public. Small children of ten or eleven would march to the big platform with head up, as though they were going to the stake, and play their part, not timidly, but with grim determination. If they broke down they began again without a moment's pause, and would die sooner than give up. It was expected of them *noblesse oblige*. To faint or be hysterical would not awaken pity and sympathy, but merely contempt, and this could not be faced.

A still more striking instance of the same spirit was seen in the years after the war, when I invented a scheme for organising the corporate charities of the College. The needs of the soldiers during the war had aroused an outburst of generosity that lasted throughout the years 1914 to 1918. It was probably the same in every school. But I was afraid that when these urgent calls ceased the impulse to give would cease also, while new needs arose daily. I suggested that each girl should decide at the beginning of the term what she wished to give to the objects in which as a body we were interested—whether local hospitals, waifs and strays, help for soldiers, or our Settlement—and should fill in a paper with the amount promised, which would be in due time collected. Once a year a meeting of all subscribers was to be held, at which a list of charities proposed for support would be read out and voted upon. On the afternoon of the inaugural meeting of this scheme, as I was going into the Hall it occurred to me to invite any girl who had proposed the name of a charity as deserving of help to support the application by a short speech. To my amazement about twelve girls of all ages got up quietly from their seats, walked to the platform and took their places. As each was

called she made an impromptu speech, limited to three minutes. The audience numbered over a thousand, but zeal for the cause and the habit of responding to suggestions carried the speakers through without succumbing to nervousness. One child of about fourteen wanted to urge the claims of the Blue Cross Society for horses. She stood, positively choking with emotion, and could only repeat again and again, 'You will help the horses, won't you? They've done such an awful lot for us in the war.' In subsequent years, when it had become an established custom and there was time to prepare, the speeches reached quite a high level of oratory. The funds, which amounted during the year to four hundred pounds, and even to five hundred pounds on one occasion, were allocated by an Executive Committee of the girls and Staff to the ten charities which headed the list. I think the plan proved very satisfactory.

However much one may wish to encourage generosity in the young, children at school must be protected from becoming the prey of preachers and speakers in search of support for a much-loved cause, and they should learn to give with discrimination, rather than merely in response to an eloquent appeal. I got a reputation from many applicants, I fear, for being unapproachable and hard-hearted. 'Just a penny all round once a month would mean so little to them and so much to us,' would be urged by one and another, but I was adamant.

It will be admitted that the worth of the traditions and training of a school must be judged mainly by the character and work of the men and women it sends forth into the workshop of the world, and since there is at the moment a tendency to decry discipline, I may be forgiven for telling two stories of efficiency in College girls which were

an immense encouragement in one's work. During the war the chief officials of a Government Department, which employed a large number of women clerks in work of a confidential kind, invited me to see the office where several of our past students were at work. I was delighted to go, but on arrival it was explained that I should see little or nothing, and that the real reason of the request was that more clerks were needed and I was asked to supply them. At first I thought this might be due to the fact that among the batch of Cheltenham girls were one or two who were really exceptional, but I was assured that this was not so. It was the reliability of the group, and their power of keeping their own counsel, which had made an impression and decided the Heads of the Department to apply for more. Besides the pleasure of hearing this, it was good to have the chance of pointing out that the conditions of work in the office were not satisfactory, the hours too long and the pay somewhat inadequate, and that I could not recommend students to apply unless these things could be remedied. My complaints met with a very kind and sympathetic reception, and matters improved.

A little later on I found that several Cheltonians were at work in a large London insurance office, and that the one first engaged was asked frequently to recommend her friends for vacancies that occurred. The head of the firm appeared to take the greatest interest in the girls and showed them much kindness, so I wrote to thank him, and to ask for his opinion of their work. He replied that the distinguishing feature of our students as clerks was that when they were novices they were willing to learn, and that as soon as they had mastered their work they were willing to take responsibility. The spirit is the same

as that inculcated in the British Navy and Army : teachableness and instant obedience to rules, together with a sense of individual responsibility when called upon to do that which is difficult--the spirit which made a boy like Cornwall able to command the ship when all superior officers were killed.

CHAPTER X

CHELTENHAM LADIES' COLLEGE : THE WAR AND AFTER

' There is not anything more wonderful
Than a great people, moving towards the deep
Of an unguessed and unfeared future ; nor
Is aught so dear of all held dear before
As the new passion stirring in the veins
When the destroying Dragon wakes from sleep.'

JOHN FREEMAN

CHAPTER X

CHELTENHAM : THE WAR AND AFTER

IN the following record I have borrowed largely from the College *Chronicle of War Work* compiled in 1919.

So much has been written of the war, good, bad and indifferent, that one hesitates to add to the mass of literature which has accumulated, even though it be but a simple school record. Yet even in a school, with its regular routine, life was fundamentally changed; we naturally draw a dividing line at the year 1914. Thoughts and feelings were turned into a new channel; leisure was used for new purposes; and the results of the five years of the war were so far-reaching on the children of England that we are still grappling with the difficulties, and discovering unsuspected effects, of that period of hope and fear.

To women and girls, more perhaps than to men, the war came as a revelation of possibilities and opportunities. It broke out at a moment when they had become conscious of their stake in the national life, and were aching to prove their mettle. What they had for years been struggling to obtain was laid at their feet. Doors at which they had long been battering were suddenly thrown open. They were welcomed and invited where they had hitherto been denied access. It was an astonishing transformation, but greater issues prevented it from attracting much attention.

We were all in our different ways too much occupied to look about us a great deal, or to meditate on what was happening.

Long before the war—as early as 1910—the College attempted, at the instigation of one of the most patriotic and devoted members of the Staff, to act as a pioneer in training English girls to take their share in the work of national defence, little dreaming how valuable and essential the work would prove. Two voluntary aid detachments were formed in the College, and students entered in numbers for First Aid and Nursing examinations. By 1914 some four hundred members of the College had gained certificates. The Domestic Science teachers instructed girls in invalid cookery, and excellent meals were cooked in field kitchens—holes made in the ground. The ingenuity of the detachments was exercised in mattress weaving, carpentry for hospitals, outside shelters, and labour-saving appliances. Yearly inspections were held, and at these times the College was transformed into a hospital, and searching inquiries were made by the officers inspecting as to hospital equipment and knowledge of nursing.

When war was declared the officials of the College Red Cross Detachments were scattered for the holidays. We had always been led to suppose that in the event of war the College would be commandeered as a hospital, and we hurried back to make preparations, so that equipment, nurses and workers should be ready. A thousand garments were collected and over one hundred pounds subscribed. The smallest details received attention, and we were almost disappointed when it was decided by the Government that school life must go on as usual, and that only in the event of invasion would schools have to be disbanded.

At first, therefore, our activities were confined to sending out comfort boxes, and supplying ambulance trains with refreshments. The various classes made up the comfort boxes, and the gifts of pipes, electric torches, chocolate, and musical instruments were accompanied by letters written by the little children to their unknown friends. Answers and acknowledgments came from men of all ranks, from colonels to privates, and the letters were published as giving a fairly comprehensive idea of life in the trenches at that period. The following extracts may, I think, be of interest :

November 15, 1914.

‘Modern conditions have made this a war of entrenchments, in which there is little scope for generalship, brilliant attacks, and dashing charges ; it has become purely a soldiers’ war, in which no living thing can remain above ground on account of the appalling shell fire, and in which, therefore, both sides have to burrow underground and live in narrow wet clay ditches, unable to stand upright or to look over the top of the trench even by day, and having to be ready to attack or to repel an attack at any moment of the night, and all the time or most of the time under a terrible shell fire. Hitherto we have been assigned so much ground to defend that in most Battalions every man has had to be in the firing line, and it has been impossible to withdraw any for rest and food, sometimes for weeks at a time. Reinforcements however are arriving, and so we hope that things will soon improve sufficiently to enable us to relieve men in turn from the trenches ; the weather, however, will not improve, and so the need for warm things increases.

‘I hope, however, you won’t think I am grumbling, or that I take a pessimistic view of things generally. I certainly do not do that, but I felt I must tell you, for the whole of England ought to know it, just what our regimental officers and men are doing. You all know *how* they have

been doing it, and as to their spirits, I was talking this morning to an Infantry Brigadier, who told me that when he felt a bit down on his luck he went down to the trenches to talk to the men and get cheered up a bit !

' By the way, the parcel of comforts that has come was from the dear little Kindergarten with their love, — do give them all our love in return, and thanks for their thoughts of us to them and to you all.

' Over and over again we have worked three days, night and day, without cessation. At night most of the work is between our trenches and those of the enemy, and these are sometimes only two hundred yards apart, so you can imagine it is not a peaceful spot ! . . . I am sure a special Providence has been looking after my men, as our losses are extraordinarily small. On one occasion our company had twelve shells into its billet in a quarter of an hour. The house was knocked down (two officers had just left before), all the bicycles were destroyed, eight horses killed, and only *one* man was hit. Several other similar instances have occurred.'

From the same Officer—Later.

' No one at home had any idea how very tough and go that heavy fighting at Ypres and south of it early this month was. We had no reserves, not a man, our line was broken in several places, and God knows how we restored it, but I think if the German troops had been quite the same quality as we met at first, our line would have been rolled up. The Prussian Guard Corps was good enough, but short of officers. One of our regiments engaged came out with the Quartermaster and seventy-five men out of over thirty officers and one thousand men.'

December 1914. From a Sergeant-Major.

' On behalf of those who have received your gifts, I wish to tender our heartfelt thanks. The note which accompanied the gift I had the honour of reading to our men, the last portion referring to the contributions of the children directed

not a few, as I might inform you that many of our men have children. Without going into details I would simply ask you, what would be the prevalent thoughts of those men, knowing those little luxuries were provided for out of children's pocket money. . . . A show of hands decided that the children's prayers for us are most acceptable.'

December 12, 1914. From a Sergeant.

'Just a few words about ourselves. To begin with here we are bobbing up and down, and most every time we bobs up it means a German down for good.'

January 1915. From a Sergeant.

'It is snowing fast and already four inches deep, at the same time there is a fierce battle raging and the roar of the heavy Guns can be distinctly heard sending its Messengers of death to some unknown destination, while on the road away in the distance one can see the Field Ambulance slowly passing along, some going up "empty," to do their duty under cover of darkness, others returning "Loaded," with not a glimmer of light except for the flash of a gun, and the occasional glare of one of the Enemies' Search Lights across the Sky, in its vain Search for our Air Craft, and so the Battle continues, and one often hears the challenge, "Halt, who goes there?" with the reply "Friend," and again the reply, "Pass friend, all 's well," but one often wonders, is all well? for one never knows what's in store for us in this Great Struggle.'

In March 1915 V.A.D. Gos. 68 was given notice of mobilisation, and the College offer of a hospital in an empty house was accepted and sanctioned for forty to fifty patients. During the last fortnight of the spring term the house was entirely cleaned by volunteers in the College, floors stained and furniture bought, the funds being throughout supplied by the Council. Each ward was

named after one of our boarding-houses, and there was great rivalry in beautifying the rooms and providing the patients with little luxuries. The Hospital was staffed from beginning to end of the war by old pupils and teachers past and also present, for some of the most ardent nurses were to be found at their ordinary College work day after day, using all their leisure and their Sundays in the service of the Hospital. Its opening is graphically described by the first Commandant :

‘ From all parts of England and Ireland cooks and nurses assembled, though many of our most experienced workers had already been drafted abroad. On June 28 took place something as terrible as an offensive to a new army ; in rushed thirty able-bodied convalescents, tired of restraint, longing for home, determined to have nothing to do with a girls’ school, and threatening to make good their escape by night. The only training that stood by us all was improvisation and resource ; by nightfall each man had explained to the Commandant how he wanted to spend his day ; light employment was what most of them longed for, and it was provided for them by 8.30 next morning in farms and workshops, subject to medical order. That night only one attempted mischief, and though afterwards there were serious individual “ crimes,” and pranks there were in plenty, the whole spirit changed. “ College was like being at home in a regiment ” was the verdict after a fortnight, men wore the house ribbon of their ward, and insisted upon coming to College Prayers ; the College tradition had somehow taken possession of them.’

Meantime other activities were in progress. A war fund was started by the old students’ Guild, and a sum of money collected sufficient to supply a mobile X-ray apparatus of the latest pattern, which was presented to the War Office and was in the field by the spring of 1915. It was reported by General Plumer to have done valuable

service ; and it survived the war and was, by the wish of the College, presented finally to the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital. From every part of the war zone came news of old students. In all we had records of some two thousand who were at work either as hospital nurses, ambulance drivers, teachers of handicrafts, clerks, masseuses, dispensers, land workers or canteen helpers.

The regular work of the College went on as usual, yet not as usual, for the ordinary work was done in an extraordinary spirit. Games were replaced by gardening, when the shortage of food became serious, and all spare time indoors was devoted to knitting or sewing for the soldiers. It was said of the Head of one House that she never left her sewing machine except to take up knitting needles. The girls knitted before College Prayers, in the 'break,' and during concerts and lectures. We had a War Workshop where sun-shields, sand-bags and periscopes were made, the latter after a design by one of the Staff ; and we had a Hospital Supply Depot where pneumonia jackets, bandages, swabs, etc., were produced with amazing rapidity. Even the College servants were pressed into the service. It was a relief to be making something for actual use. 'While doing this,' wrote one of the most active workers, 'we could forget temporarily how boring it was to have to get on with our education, while sisters and cousins, and even aunts and mothers were V.A.D.'s, W.A.A.C.'s, or W.R.E.N.'s.' There was no difficulty about funds. From beginning to end of the war they never failed, and the total output of the College workshops was just over fifty-five thousand articles. By the children's own wish the money usually spent on prizes was devoted to the soldiers, and certificates of honour, surely far more valuable, took the place of books. Many other sacrifices

were initiated by themselves, but perhaps it was even more striking that as a body there should be no slackening of effort, no weakening of purpose, and no grumbling throughout the five years.

In the spring of 1915 it was decided that the College girls should send comfort boxes to prisoners of war in Germany, instead of to the troops, and many classes and members of the Staff 'adopted' a prisoner, and sent as many parcels as they could afford. Shopping expeditions were arranged, the girls taking turns to go; and the best packers in the class devoted their energies to packing the parcel. This was no easy matter, as weight had to be considered, and everything had to be most secure, also lists appended, and at first declaration forms filled in. Sometimes enthusiasm outran discretion, as when one set of shoppers, having heard that fats were short in Germany, determined that their prisoner should not suffer, and contributed out of their own pocket-money half a pound of fresh butter, which, in the absence of the mistress in charge, they put in at the top of the parcel just wrapped in paper. History does not relate in what state it reached its destination after a month spent on the way!

I had in 1915 a unique and memorable experience in Yorkshire. I was speaking one evening in the Winter Gardens at Harrogate for the National Mission. There had been an air raid the night before, and there was a likelihood of another. So the great hall was in darkness, except for a few dim red lamps hung from the roof. The platform was high above the audience, which filled the building. It was a strange sight, and a still stranger experience to speak in the darkness to the throng of men and women. Here and there one could just see a white face upturned to the platform. That was all. One of

the speakers complained of the irresponsiveness of the people, but Yorkshiremen are not demonstrative, and the conditions were awe-inspiring. There was no lack of attention.

In 1915 the Royal Society War Committee, working under the National Health Insurance Commission, enlisted the assistance of about forty University and College laboratories throughout the country for the production of certain stages in the preparation of novocain. Our College laboratory was one of these, and during July and the summer holidays of 1915 members of the Science Staffs of our own College and of other schools in Cheltenham, and old girls, worked at the preparation of glycol-chlorhydrin, one of the substances needed in the manufacture. Towards the end of 1915 and the beginning of 1916 we co-operated with seventeen other laboratories in the manufacture of another local anæsthetic called beta-eucaine, our share being the production of acetal. The other 'war industry' of the College laboratory was the making of iodine ampoules; this continued for the greater part of the period of the war, and the younger College girls were able to give some help in this work.

Contributions towards the supply of drugs was another form of war activity. Before the war the principal source of supply of medicinal herbs was Germany, and when this was cut off it became necessary to develop home resources. With this end in view the National Herb Growing Association was formed in January 1916, to act as an intermediate agency between small growers and the wholesale firms, who would only buy in large quantities, and also to give information and advice as to the growing, collecting and drying of herbs. At the end of the summer term it was arranged that a large number of girls, some

two hundred, should be set free to go into the country on an herb-gathering expedition. On a glorious summer morning six tram loads of girls set out to collect some six or seven specified plants from different districts. The girls had previously been given the opportunity of seeing samples of these plants, and the Staff in charge were able to direct how they should best be gathered. All our material was accepted and pronounced 'good.' It was sold during the autumn and the proceeds handed over to our Hospital, enabling us to purchase a drum for sterilised dressings.

The girls had some taste of going 'on the land': not only was a large patch of the playing field dug up for potatoes, and vegetables cultivated in the garden of an empty house, but in the summer of 1917 parties of volunteers went to the rescue of a large crop of potatoes which was being ruined by weeds. I received a letter afterwards saying that their efforts had resulted in saving the crop which was grown for the Red Cross hospitals.

In August 1917 I organised a party of old and present College girls to go to Westbury-on-Severn for fruit-picking. We took a large old-fashioned house and succeeded in converting the farmer to a belief in women's steadiness and persistency in work. The strongest of the party did from eight to eleven hours a day, and still maintained they were enjoying themselves thoroughly. We certainly learnt to appreciate a Sunday rest as never before.

In 1918 the College Council lent two houses for the purpose of collecting all the waste material from the College boarding-houses. This was collected weekly, voluntarily, by the College gardeners, and brought to the houses, where it was sorted. The paper was put in sacks, and when a ton was collected was despatched to Avonmouth for munition making. The bones were sorted, and

eventually were made into glycerine, also for munitions. Biscuit tins and bottles were packed back to their original firms, jam jars and bottles sold to the local jam factory. Empty tins were collected in the yard and allowed to get rusty, and when a ton was collected (which we never got) were to be crushed by a steam roller and sent to France for road-making. Even the soot which came down from the unswept chimneys in the empty houses where the work was done was sold; and a swarm of bees having taken up their abode between the window frame and the wainscot, the honey was collected and sold. Many tasks of supreme difficulty were undertaken during the war by women, but I think it will be agreed that none could have been more unpleasant than the sorting I have described. Towards the end of the war when I was in France I saw two Englishwomen receive honours from a French General at Calais for the work they had done in superintending for years the Calais fisherwomen occupied in dealing with war refuse.

I fancy that the war activities at our doors accounted for the fact that hardly any of the Staff applied for leave of absence during these years. Even the most wildly patriotic found themselves satisfied by continuing their familiar daily work in College, and adding to it the unfamiliar direct war service in hospital or workshop. When children's homes were so upset, and life held for them much that was strange, it was good to have stability in College and a class mistress to appeal to who was already a tried friend. To those of us occupied in administration, and dealing perpetually with new problems arising from the general upheaval, it was everything not to lose such valuable adjutants.

In recording the war efforts of the College I am not

wishing to exalt them. We were not at all more patriotic and energetic than other schools, but every one was so much occupied during those strenuous years that there was little time to attend to the doings of one's neighbours, and it may be of interest to those who had no touch of schools during that period to know what was happening in our midst. To us it is a pleasure to remember that our large community was able to do its 'bit,' in addition to seeing that the rising generation was not neglected, and that as far as we could manage it the children were being helped to be 'happy, healthy and wise.'

There were very real difficulties in achieving this three-fold aim. In the first place, homes were in many cases entirely disorganised. The children not only had their fathers and brothers at the front, but mothers and sisters were occupied with war service at home. For day-girls there was no regularity in the home life, and little companionship or discipline. They were obliged to look after themselves. For the boarders there was the strain of being separated from their people, and having to endure anxiety and the loss of dear ones, amongst those who, however sympathetic, were unable to share their sorrows, and had their own burdens to bear.

We in the west of England were fortunate in being practically free throughout the war from fear of bombardment, but we had a large number of children in the College sent to us to escape from danger or recover from the shocks of raids elsewhere, and they needed care and special attention. The problem of food supply would have been more overwhelming but for the splendid co-operation of the Cheltenham tradesmen. I arranged a conference with them at the outset of the war and enlisted their help, and they never failed us. It was a great advantage to know

the position from their point of view, and the difficulties they had to surmount. Rationing for five hundred boarders was no easy matter, and the pains taken by the boarding-house Heads was beyond praise. Records were kept with great exactitude, and the children were weighed every fortnight, so that any deterioration in health was detected at once and steps were taken. I do not think health suffered at the time, but I often wonder whether the present generation of long-limbed, stooping and astoundingly thin girls of twenty to twenty-five may not be due to the food-stuffs on which they were reared for five or six years, and the absence of fats. They never grumbled—‘it was not done’—but accepted war conditions in a very calm, matter-of-fact way. At first there was a disinclination for regular lessons due to the general upheaval around them, the atmosphere of uncertainty and unrest, but, as the war continued, this passed off; and in schools generally, elementary and secondary, I should say that the children were quick to see how important it was for them to equip themselves for a useful life, and how necessary that women should justify their existence by some form of service for the community. The importance of efficiency was evident, even if it were only in the packing of parcels or making of swabs. The children of every class and of all ages wanted to learn, wanted to get on, wanted to do something. In a London school a small girl was under punishment, and had been bidden to stay in and do her sums again. There was a raid alarm and each child had to creep under her desk. Presently a small hand was observed stretching out to claim the sum-book, pencil and paper, and the child emerged triumphant when the raid was over, saying, ‘I needn’t stay in; I’ve done my sums all right.’ The love of the father and desire to please him

worked wonders. There was another child of eight, very idle and backward, and mother and teachers were in despair. The Headmistress told her that if she worked well for a whole term she would write a good report to the father in France, and the child learnt more in that term than she had learnt hitherto in a year.

In the spring of 1919 Sir Arthur Yapp came to speak to the College of the work of the Y.M.C.A., and talked to the girls of the love of children which distinguished the British Tommy. I asked him whether, among the many lecturers sent to France, any one had told the men what the children of England had done during the war. He turned round, apparently struck with the idea, and replied, 'No, would you go?' And I promised to do my best.

In the Easter holidays I went over to Calais. I had got some information on my subject from other schools, and in one elementary school essays on the war and its effects had been given to the children to write, with delightful results :

'We won the war—my father and the others did it.'

'The Germans were fighting us, so my father said he had better go and see to it.'

'We missed Father every day, but it was better than having a "conchy" father.'

'We had a big job to get things when the war was on, so you had to be careful and not waste nothing. You had to take off your pinafore to keep it clean for school for a week. You couldn't have your pinafore starched when the great war was on.'

Even the journey to Calais from Boulogne was full of interest to one who had previously only known France as a holiday haunt. At the stations everywhere were British troops, with that air of quiet possession which the English

always seem to adopt. The natives seemed content that it should be so, and in Calais itself it was the same. The English dominated the town without any obvious self-assertiveness.

I spoke in many Y.M.C.A. huts in and near Calais. It was the custom to have quite informal talks, and the men collected around the speaker if they were interested in the subject, or remained in another part of the hut, occupied with books or letters. The notice announcing a lecture would produce the nucleus of an audience, then one and another man would get up from his far corner of the hut and stroll over to hear what was going on. Sometimes there would be a large gathering, sometimes only a handful, but the men were invariably attentive and full of interest. There was no question as to the hold that their children had over them, and I guessed that the reason why no such lectures had been arranged before was that they would have been impossible in the days of uncertainty and fighting when it was not safe for the soldiers to dwell upon thoughts of home, wife and children too much, lest they should be unmanned. It was clear from all that they said that their peace of mind at the front, and their power of doing their work, depended largely on the knowledge that all was well at home, and that their children were not suffering and were being kept occupied and happy ; and they were very much alive to the value of education, in view of the future. Certainly I came back assured that doubts with regard to school-keeping being a form of war service might be set at rest.

We can hardly be thankful enough that, owing to the fact that we were saved from invasion, the children of England were saved from the sight of horrors with which the children of France and Belgium became only too familiar. At the

same time, the realisation of all that war means was denied to us, and it was the more wonderful that the young should have remained so steady and unwavering in work and in endurance. It was not easy to determine how much it was desirable to tell them of what was happening. On the one hand, there were those who held it wrong to darken the lives of the young, and would gladly have shielded them and encouraged them to live a wholly normal life. On the other, there were those who ignored the difference between children and their elders, and expected them to make sacrifices and to accept uncomplainingly both hardships and the dullness and drabness of homes that were empty.

I think that the right course lay somewhere between these two extremes. Why should not schoolgirls feel they had their share in the sacrifices and in the anxieties of the war, as they had their share in the adventures and the glory? They wished it so, I am sure. At the same time, youth must have relief. It cannot bear to have thought or feeling concentrated too long on the unhappy and gloomy side of life: and it was right there should be gaiety and forgetfulness at times, and not too much talk of what was happening. There came a time in the war when, to be quite honest, we all got somewhat used to the stories of attacks and repulses, of mines, poison gas and liquid fire, and of vessels blown to pieces or torpedoed. They no longer thrilled us as at first, and it was simply that we were incapable of more strain. Nature was revolting: she was putting out danger signals and forcing us to attend to them.

Throughout the war the fortitude of the girls in sorrow and anxiety was magnificent, and the Prayer Room was invaluable in times of loss as a refuge and a quiet place for

intercession. A book was kept there containing the names of those brothers and fathers of members of the College in the fighting line, and the room was in daily use. The anxiety we all shared was a bond to draw us closer together. Girls would bring one their post-cards from brothers in the field, and it was not difficult to conceive a personal interest in men one had never seen, many of whom, alas, one never would see.

It became rare for any girl to stay away from College even for a day when bad news came. One day I heard the news of the death of a student's brother, and, realising what it would mean to the sister, was so much of a coward that I feared to send for her. I need not have been afraid. An hour afterwards she passed me in the Hall, and as I called her she turned round, her face alight and smiling, and all she said was, 'I am far too proud to be sad.' That was the spirit which prevailed in our midst on Armistice Day. We had a service in College immediately after the announcement of the news. The impression given by one of the Staff well expresses the general feeling: 'Within half an hour the Hall was thronged. College servants, St. Stephen's School, Kindergarten, the boarding-house heads, parents, and even one Council member, all contrived to be there. The service had been planned beforehand and the orchestra was in its place. Nobody could be capable of forgetting the hymn "By every nation, race and tongue" with its threefold alleluia, or the lesson "How beautiful upon the mountains." I wondered how some would bear that moment, which for all of us was full of such mingled joy and agony. But unselfishness won the day; it had become a habit not to think of themselves, and "death was swallowed up in victory," as we sang our solemn *Te Deum*.'

We are accustomed nowadays to condemnation of the younger generation, who seem to forget those years of sorrow, but we must be fair to them. It is just ten years since the war broke out and nearly six years since it ceased. Conditions of life have never become entirely normal again, and in many homes the losses of the war have darkened permanently the lives of fathers and mothers. Girls of twenty to twenty-four were the schoolgirls of the great war. They both gained much in character, and lost much thereby. They gained in general efficiency, and they learnt many things they would never have learnt in the same way in times of peace—the value of self-sacrifice, loyalty, self-control, courage and generosity, resourcefulness, and independence in action. But when it was over there came a natural reaction, and a clamouring for the things they had never had; all the fun of Henley, and Lords, and University Commemoration, and the races, the jollity of shooting parties and house parties, and the hunting-field; and they knew they could never recapture the ‘years that the locust had eaten.’ If they seem rather hard, rough and noisy, and intent on self, can we wonder or reproach them? They have had to stand alone, and to undertake responsibilities of which we in our youth never dreamed. They have read and thought and felt more than we did, and kept their own counsel. Is it not natural that they should be independent, and perhaps fiercely so; that they should be unwilling to ask advice, and some of them given to sudden outbursts of temper or tears, which show nerves still on edge? They annoy us at times by an assumption that the world is made for them, and it is not always easy to take with a good grace their opinion that the experience of their elders is of little value. They have a knowledge of their capacities, but very little of their

limitations, and they are inclined to be rather cynical. But many of them have a certain philosophy of life which we may envy, and if an emergency arose they would be equal to it as they were in 1914. Above all, they have courage. They learnt it in school-days, and they will never lose it.

We may perhaps address youth in the words of *An Ancient to Ancients* :

‘ Much is there waits you we have missed ;
 Much lore we leave you worth the knowing.
 Much, much, has laid outside our ken ;
 Nay, rush not, time serves, we are going.’ ¹

¹ Thomas Hardy.

CHAPTER XI

SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

‘There ’s nought so queer as folk.’

North Country Proverb.

CHAPTER XI

SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

IN looking back on one's work the things which stand out most vividly are not those on which pamphlets are issued by the Board of Education, such as the adjustment of curriculum, arrangements for examinations, questions of finance and distribution of work. Such matters must be tackled as occasion arises, conclusions must be arrived at, reforms instituted ; and then they can, mercifully, be put out of one's mind for a time, until a re-inspection is required. They do not touch the heart of one's work, as it were, and I find myself dwelling far more on the human relationships with girls, parents, Staff or Council, and subjects connected with these, for success or failure here is material to the success or failure of the whole of the professional life.

As far as the girls are concerned, one realises from the first that they cannot be treated as pawns on a chess-board, but require the intimate knowledge which is only possible if a relation of friendship is established. The power of developing the whole personality, and securing the best results in the school life of each, depend upon using sympathetic insight, skill in character reading, and a power of getting rapidly into touch. And the same qualities are needed in dealing with the Staff.

In the course of forty years I believe that I have gained a knowledge of children, girls and women, between the

ages of five and twenty-five, which is thorough and extensive. I think I know their capacities, their temperaments, their possibilities and their limitations, their likes and dislikes, their ambitions and ideals. I have watched their physical, intellectual, social, moral and religious development. I have been their comrade, teacher, director in studies and games, and their counsellor in the conduct of their lives and choice of their professions. I have seen them in time of peace and in time of war, in joy and in sorrow, in hours of victory and of defeat, in riches and in poverty, in sickness and in health. I have taken them 'for better, for worse,' and have loved and admired, and, at times, as truly disliked and despised them. They have been an extraordinarily interesting study, and the more so of late, because a great change has come over the younger generation in the last ten years—a change as fundamental as that which affected the girlhood of England in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Victorians and Georgians are very far apart.

In order to gain and retain the friendship and sympathy of the young, it is wise to avoid any suspicion of talking down to them, and, however immature they may be, to try to meet them on equal terms. It is well, too, to believe in the reasonableness of the most unreasonable; and it is hardly necessary to add that influence over them will always be largely due to the fact that one is not afraid of them, as are many of the parents of to-day.

Sometimes there is a tendency amongst those who rule over the young to form a very rapid judgment as to the trustworthiness or untrustworthiness of a child. On the whole, I think that the child of to-day is amazingly honest, almost brutally and rudely so, and I feel strongly that she should be trusted utterly, without a question, until she

has been proved deceitful, and then no mercy should be shown. In order to ensure truthfulness, every child who is in disgrace should be given ample time to tell her own story, so that there may be no danger of untruthfulness due to moral cowardice.

No hard and fast rule can be laid down, I think, as to the number of pupils a Headmaster or Headmistress can know personally. Thring's limit for Uppingham was three hundred. Much depends on the pupils as well as on the Head, on the opportunities offered or made, and on the power of rapidly getting into touch. I found that some girls remained always impossible to know and were glad to pass in a crowd unobserved. They had nothing distinctive about them. They were neither tall nor short, fat nor thin, beautiful nor plain, clever nor stupid. They had no marked tastes, no keen ambitions, and were remarkable neither on the playing fields nor in the class-room. Above all, they showed no interest nor responsiveness when one talked with them. They seemed to adopt as their motto, 'Happy is the girl that has no history,' and were negligible by choice in the corporate life. After they had left they were hard to recall, while others could never be forgotten.

It is the healthy girl—healthy in mind and body, with plenty of vigour and energy—who makes the greatest impression upon one, for she calls out one's vitality; and when teaching a class one finds oneself unconsciously addressing her, for in her eagerness she shows, almost in spite of herself, approval or disapproval of all that one says. Again, on the playing fields, it is not necessarily the best player, but the most eager, the one on tip-toe, who makes her mark. In all the little incidents of daily life the same girl will be found ready to take up a piece of

new work in House or class, not from a love of being conspicuous, but from sheer delight in the exercise of her faculties. She helps with the School Magazine and in the House dramatic performances, and somehow or other she does not get jaded or overworked, but the more numerous her occupations the gayer does she become.

I have observed that most selfish girls are the daughters of the very unselfish parents, and unselfish ones of the selfish. It seems the irony of fate that the parent who is most anxious that her child should take all the advantages that are given by a big school, because, as she says somewhat pathetically, she has never had any of them herself, should frequently be creating a selfish and apathetic girl. I have often surprised parents by discouraging riding and swimming lessons, singing, piano, violin and so on, not only on the ground that the child would be overpressed, but quite as much because I believe it is best for the girl to earn many of her pleasures by steady work, rather than to have these things provided for her without any effort on her part. She does not appreciate what comes to her without any trouble, and is often *blasé* and bored with life and all that is provided for her almost before she has begun living; whereas the child who has been debarred by home conditions from having any of the joys of corporate life, and whose parents are too poor, perhaps, to afford many extras, is full of zest and anxious to make the most of everything that comes her way.

Boarding-school life, and the happenings of the last ten years, have certainly engendered a spirit of endurance and courage in girls. This is shown in illness, among other things. Reports from the Sanatorium of the conduct of children are invariably good, and it is the exception for a

child to be the least trouble during illness. Pain is endured without a murmur, and marvellous fortitude is shown, too, if there is an accident on the playing fields. No doubt excitement and public opinion carry the victim through, but this does not make it any the less admirable.

Self-sufficiency and aggressiveness are charges often brought against girls nowadays, but these are not apparent in their ordinary school life. If they are trained to take responsibility in small ways, and taught to rule not only themselves but groups of their companions, it is of course natural that they should develop an assurance not to be found in girls entirely brought up at home, nor in the girls of an earlier generation.

Many of the petty faults of which girls are very generally supposed to be guilty disappear at school. Sneaking, for instance, is as detestable to girls as it is to boys. I suppose that vanity is a petty fault, and one of the advantages of a school uniform is that it keeps a girl from too much thought about her dress, and concentrates her attention on the details which go to make the difference between the well- or ill-dressed girl in uniform—neatness, smartness and freshness. I do not think we wish that all concern for personal appearance should be eliminated, and it is wholly good that girls should have a standard in dress which depends on the care that they exercise rather than on the money that they spend. All uniforms are simple, and are valuable as destroying the tendency to snobbishness, and in preventing some children from being smarter than their neighbours. The existence of a school uniform makes it impossible, also, for parents to dress their children in a grotesque fashion, causing much embarrassment to the unfortunate offspring. I knew one small boy at a day-school who, when asked to

invite friends to his birthday party, firmly refused, and finally explained his reasons thus : ' You see, they don't know at my school that I have a nursery, and I might be dressed in tussore silk.' Uniform emphasises the importance of dress being both workmanlike and suitable. It is natural and right that later on the question of personal appearance should occupy a certain amount of time, but it is most undesirable that this should happen during school-days.

Although I believe that the life of a large boarding school is perhaps the most happy and healthy for the normal girl, and I could enumerate many more of its advantages, I am not blind to its drawbacks. Apart from the fact that the girls miss the companionship of grown-up people and all that they would learn from conversation going on around them, to which I have already referred, they miss much training in little ways of usefulness, and it is somewhat difficult for them to realise that they are of secondary rather than primary importance in a household.

Home life is organised for the grown-up people. Meals are arranged to suit parents, and the children have to fit in with what exists. Claims are made on them for various little services. It may be to take up breakfast to some one who is ill, to get tea for a casual visitor, to do some household mending, to help in the spring cleaning, or to look after younger brothers and sisters. If there is a party they take their share in the preparations, and learn in a hundred ways to make themselves useful by fetching and carrying.

But the whole life of the boarding school is ordered for the children, and household arrangements revolve round them. It is assumed, or is actually the case, that their time is so fully occupied that they cannot be expected to

be messengers, nor can their carefully organised games or other daily arrangements be upset by making extraneous demands upon them. Nothing must interfere with the ordinary routine, and so children miss much that would make them useful. Even in the holidays there is a tendency to save them from any demands that might seem burdensome.

It is, therefore, difficult for the public school girl to be thoroughly domestic, and this may be the reason why, on returning home after their school life, many girls feel desperately at a loss, and do not know how to settle down happily. I remember one mother telling me that it took a year for her girl to find out what she wanted to do at home. And this difficulty is emphasised by the fact that if they have been at school for some years their friends are mostly those of the school and do not belong to the place in which they live.

By way of getting to know more of the home life of the children, and of stimulating their interest in household activities, I used to ask them at the beginning of term to give me a list of the useful things they had done in the holidays, and we had the greatest fun over careful descriptions of bedmaking, knife and boot cleaning, scrubbing and so on. This plan also proved very valuable in revealing a girl's abilities in certain directions quite unsuspected by me.

On the whole, the relations between girls in a big boarding school are wholesome and satisfactory. They are loyal to each other, and more prone to admire rather extravagantly than to carp or cavil. They are always very quick to recognise ability in any direction, and proud of the girls in their House who distinguish themselves either in intellectual pursuits or games, so long only as those girls have not a good opinion of themselves.

In the days of the war it was said that the only two subjects discussed in the trenches were religion and football, and I have been told that the two subjects of conversation which are of perennial interest to men are religion and love. It might be said, I think, that religion, friendship and games are of paramount interest to girls also. Few, if any, girls nowadays belong to the class of sentimental young ladies of the time of Fanny Burney. The girl who is interested in religion is not, as a rule, sentimentally interested. It is for her the main method of approach to a solution of the problems of conduct which beset her, in which she is always interested, but not always instructed.

When we turn from the girls to relations with one's teachers in the corporate life, it will be recognised that the care, encouragement and criticism of the Staff is hardly less important than the training of the children, but it will be allowed to be more difficult in many ways. The material is not so plastic on which one has to work, habits are more fixed, and experience may be greater than one's own. It is the day of many theories of education, and one does not interfere with individual convictions in a teacher without grave reason. Even if results do not seem to justify the methods employed, it may be better for teachers to find their way to success rather than to be shown it. It requires much watchfulness to discover that a mistress who bores quick intelligent children may have just the patience and comprehension which the dullards want, and that organisation or statistical work may be the strong point of some mathematician who is wearied of teaching elementary algebra and geometry. The shifting of one's *dramatis personae* may sometimes work wonders. It is well, I believe, to take the Staff as much as possible

into one's confidence, to let the seniors at least share the plans that are taking shape, and the desires which one is cherishing ; to let them feel that the school is a co-operative society, to enlist their help in making necessary adjustments to meet new needs, and to welcome suggestions from them. Further, in order that they may have as full a knowledge as may be of the children directly under them, they should be encouraged to know the parents and be free to discuss the child's school life with them. This intercourse, also, brings more opportunity to them of social life—most necessary for those engaged in teaching.

I would recommend a Headmistress to share any information about a child with those engaged in teaching her. They deserve the fullest confidence, and may be greatly helped thereby. I would even go further, and pass on to them any criticism or appreciation of their teaching that may be made by parents, unless forbidden to do so. A sensible teacher will welcome comments on her work, even if they are not always encouraging.

The institution of the Burnham scale of salaries and pensions has relieved those engaged in education from pressing anxiety as to their future, but I am convinced that happiness in their professional life depends principally on the friendliness of colleagues, a spirit of enterprise and pride in their work, and the certainty of having a time-table reasonable enough to allow them leisure to pursue some outside interests. They need also to continue to be students in their special subjects as well as students in the art of teaching. The best teacher, it goes without saying, is one who has chosen her profession from pure love of it, who has a high view of the dignity of her work, and is as alert and eager as the keenest of her pupils.

First and foremost in her equipment, however, I should place love of young people, for I believe that no enthusiasm for a subject, nor knowledge of it, nor power of representing it lucidly and in an interesting form will compensate for lack of human love and that interest which includes sympathy and understanding. The recognition of this is contained in the saying of Professor John Adams :

‘The master must know Latin : and he must know John. Not so long ago it was considered enough to know Latin. . . . John was either taken for granted or held to be not worth knowing.’¹

And it is this that we mean fundamentally when we say that a teacher’s life should be a vocation, not a profession. It is the human interest which prevents the day’s work from becoming monotonous and dreary, and makes it a perpetual voyage of discovery. For the class teacher there is not only the interest in the individual child, which every governess may have, but also in a group of children acting and reacting on each other.

A teacher must have the power to speak in the language of children. By that I do not in the least mean talking baby language, but realising when she is dealing with matters outside their experience and therefore needing illustration from those within its range. She must also be possessed of the power of quick observation, that she may discern when there is lack of understanding, which children sometimes try to hide to save themselves trouble.

It is not at all unusual for a teacher fresh from College to try to use her lecture notes, and to be impelled to give

¹ *The Herbartian Psychology applied to Education.*

a lecture instead of a lesson ; but in so doing she is losing her chance of being educated in the child's mind, for the child has no part in the work. The ideal teacher adapts herself to the intellectual needs of the children, discovers where there are gaps in knowledge or comprehension, and is ever ready to give a well-planned lesson a new shape should the necessity suddenly arise. She is on her guard, too, against the clever child who will deliberately suggest digressions to avoid having to betray the fact that she has not prepared her lesson properly, a snare into which the unwary teacher will almost certainly fall. Children seem to me nowadays more likely to beguile the mistress into doing the major part of the work than the mistress is to throw too much of the burden on the class.

I believe that an afternoon session in school is not wholly desirable, for it increases the teaching hours and diminishes the work to be prepared. There is a danger lest children should be too much taught and be thrown too little on their own resources. It is by work done alone that the idle child can best be discerned and the stupid child best understood, and the teacher receive a criticism on the lesson she has given which is enlightening and salutary.

The quality of exactitude is an important one for every teacher. She is obliged to train the children in neatness, punctuality and so on, and she must realise that precept carries very little weight without example. Children should never be disillusioned or disappointed in the wisdom of those in authority, and it is well to avoid giving occasion to the child to make unspoken adverse criticisms. Children are imitative and impressionable, and, let it never be forgotten, very severe critics. Teachers can do an immense amount towards inspiring their pupils with the right point of view about marks, prizes and ambition

generally, and also as to the right place to be allotted to games in relation to work. They can, amongst other things, influence the attitude of the children towards the breaking of rules, cheating, and the amount of help that is allowable over work. It is essential that children should have a sound judgment on these things, and opportunities occur very frequently for the class teacher to controvert their dangerous traditional points of view on some of these subjects.

It is not only good for the mistress to be an athlete, it is good that she should be with the girls on the playing fields; for the child at work is very different from the child at play, and the teacher needs to view her from as many angles as possible.

The value of training I hold to be very great, although, at the same time, I think that it is often overrated. There is no royal road for acquiring the art of teaching. It is quite certain, however, that the attitude of a teacher should be that of a learner during the whole of her career. Indeed all those who are really sincere are 'eager to learn, open to every new and stimulating idea, and free altogether from the malignant conservatism of the disappointed type.'

I have had the happiness of knowing many really great teachers, for whom I have the profoundest respect—unalterable in their serenity and unfailing good temper, whose constant interest is in one and all of the pupils with whom they have to deal, and who are totally free from prejudice.

And now let us turn to the parents. They are supposed to be the bane of the Headmistress's life, but, if carefully handled, they really prove very amenable, and they are almost as interesting a study as are the girls. Many

respond to training, and when that is impossible, they are far more often a source of wonder and amusement than of annoyance! In order to avoid friction and to secure co-operation there must be the same trouble taken and the same sympathy brought to bear as with the girls. With the parents, however, it is a case of sympathetic imagination rather than of sympathetic insight. One must put oneself in the place of the father or mother, and so find out which is the best method of approach. It should not be impossible to read the parent in some measure through knowledge of the child.

The greater number of parents were indeed one's friends and staunch supporters, co-operating in one's efforts, abstaining from unnecessary interference, adopting suggestions and ready to make them, and above all keeping so closely in touch with the girl that the training of school was continued at home. One of the wisest mothers I knew, who had an only child in the College for years, came down each term for a few days that she might realise the child in her school environment, know her friends, understand her games and interests, and keep in touch with her teachers. She never worried but she watched and noticed, and she never lost for a moment the sense of comradeship and intimacy with her daughter in those years in which she was absent from home. I learnt much from the wisdom of her comments and close observation.

There are, however, other types. There is the parent who has sent her child to school at the earliest moment, and knows less about her than one would think possible. She is in some cases uncertain of her girl's age, quite ignorant of her powers or attainments, and somewhat annoyed if asked to give any sketch of her character.

I remember one mother who, when I begged her to tell me about the child's disposition, seemed to think that I was insulting her, and replied indignantly, 'Oh, Mary is of a very exalted virtue.' These parents dump their children in a school without any inquiries as to tone, companions or housemistresses. They do not know whether they wish their girl to be confirmed, or to prepare for an examination, and they have one stock answer to every question, 'I am quite content to leave that to you.' They may be going to the other end of the world, but make no arrangements as to illness, and one has to remember to secure powers authorising an operation should need arise, for this contingency has never been considered by them.

The most heartless parents in my experience were a father and mother who had left their daughter, when quite a small child, to be educated in England, and had not seen her for some ten years. The mother arrived from the East on a day in which her girl was taking part in what in old days was known as a Dancing Display. She was one of the leaders, and was specially graceful and attractive. I asked the mother about her plans for her on leaving, and whether she was satisfied with her development. She said that she was delighted with her, and so relieved to find that she was quite good-looking, as her husband had said that she could take the daughter out to the East if she was pretty, but he did not want her if she was gawky and plain. They did not appear to care in the least for the child's mental or moral development, but solely for her looks and manners. It was a deplorable result of the separation which is necessitated by many foreign appointments: but, mercifully, such indifference is rare.

The fussy parent is a complete contrast to these.

She acts as though her child were the only one in the whole school, and would in any case be under the immediate and hourly care and supervision of the Principal ; she assumes that one will administer cough mixture oneself and change the child's wet shoes ; she hopes one will have frequent and long talks on her work with her daughter and send constant reports ; she floods one with information concerning her tastes and distastes, and her past history from her birth. Unless forbidden by heartless authorities, either father or mother makes sudden visits to see how the child fares, with the result that the unfortunate daughter is quite prevented from settling down in school and has no sooner got over one attack of home-sickness than another is induced. Moreover, she suffers from the actual or supposed comments of her schoolfellows, who are apt to regard anything unusual as absurd. Girls, like boys, are alarmed lest their parents may do something unorthodox in school. They are terrified lest they should be kissed too much in public, called by some family nickname, or lest the parents should speak to the authorities at the wrong moment or make the wrong remark. One mother told me that she was afraid to move or speak in the College, so anxious was her instructor that she should not make a *faux pas* !

Next, there is the masterful parent, who is accustomed to rule his subordinates with a rod of iron, and expects his word to be law to every one. He apparently thinks that school rules exist only to be broken. Children are not sent back on the right day, and are required to join the family party for winter sports long before the end of the term, or must be sent at a moment's notice to the wedding of a second cousin or the coming of age of a family friend. He is amazed that any objection should be made, and

writes long letters of protest; and having frequently interrupted work expresses much surprise if there are doubts as to success in examinations on the ground that there were many gaps in the lessons owing to irregular attendance.

Such a parent refuses to accept the verdict of a girl's teachers on her abilities, and insists, or tries to insist, on her entering for examinations wholly beyond her powers; and, if she is allowed to make an attempt and fails, writes that the fault in his opinion lies with the school curriculum, the teaching and the organisation, but has next to nothing to do with his daughter. One parent wrote: 'I consider the responsibility of passing examinations should be upon the teachers, not on the pupils, and a school be for the child, not the child for the school.' Apparently the teachers were expected to make bricks without straw.

I fancy, from the way in which I was regarded as a tyrant for enforcing rules, that parents do not expect the same adherence to regulations in the case of girls as of boys, and are also more at the mercy of persuasion from their daughters. I sometimes found it easy to trace the girl behind the parent's letter, and stopped applications by pointing out that an unauthorised extension of holidays would mean the sacrifice of the next special holiday in term time.

The strong persistent belief in the ability of their daughters that some parents possess is positively pathetic, and so is their consequent disappointment when failure comes. Fathers, especially, feel acutely about their girls, and I have had many painful moments with them when disillusioned as to a child's mentality or character. But it happened very rarely indeed that in any crisis a parent failed to uphold one, even at the cost of much suffering.

Perhaps they realised how badly one minded oneself when things went wrong, and how hard it was to take action that seemed severe.

Sometimes one is startled by the parents' point of view, as, doubtless, they are often startled by ours. I was staying once in the holidays with a friend whose daughter was in the College, and I criticised the elaborate plans being made for her amusement—theatres, dances, and so on—and the permission given the child to have breakfast in bed and to laze through the day. 'It is your fault,' said the mother; 'you fill the days at school so full, and provide so many interests and entertainments, that we are forced to do something if we would not have our girls find school more attractive than home. You send them home to us, moreover, at the end of term tired with work and play, so we naturally let them rest.' It gave one furiously to think, and there was indeed some truth in the charge, though we could reply that we only provided what the majority of parents demanded, and that we were constantly on our guard lest children should be over-stimulated.

I believe greatly in the value of Conferences and Parents' Associations as a means of bringing school and home into touch, but these are rarely possible with other than day parents on account of distance. The point of view of the parent is very valuable to the schoolmistress, and many questions of discipline and regulations can easily be settled after friendly discussion.

There are times when every schoolmistress has pangs of disappointment, and the parents, I confess, are often responsible for these. It seemed to me incredible that a child could be at school for six or seven years, receive care and sympathy, and belong to us for the greater part of the

year, and that on leaving no word should come from those to whom we rendered an account of our stewardship in the child we returned to them. Some, it is true, wrote charming letters, but the majority seemed to regard the training of their girls as a business transaction which had been wound up and there was nothing further to be said. Certainly we did not so conceive it, and some slight recognition of the love and thought, which figure in no contract, would have been appreciated. One longed to say to them in the words of Browning's *Andrea del Sarto* :

‘ All I care for is, whether you’re—not grateful—but
more pleased.’

I have said nothing hitherto about the importance of the Council or Governing Body in one's professional life, and yet it is almost impossible to overrate. Their attitude not only makes all the difference to one's happiness and freedom in action, but an enormous difference to the progress of one's work. It is not so easy to have an ideal relationship as may at first appear. It is quite as possible for the Council to err on the side of neglect as of interference. A Governing Body that ‘ knows little and cares less ’ about the place it governs, that behaves like an absentee landlord, visiting his property at rare intervals, arranging the finances, receiving rents, authorising expenditure, but having no human touch, is, perhaps, the worst of all. The agent left in charge has full responsibility, but not full power—a very unsatisfactory position. Members of Council in complete ignorance cannot be fully informed in the brief time at disposal in meetings, and the consequence is that matters may be decided by a vote which is not in any way an intelligent vote, to the despair of the chief executive officer. The Governors

who have established happy relations with the Principal may be relied upon to take interest without desiring to interfere, and it is well that in any professional post the limit of authority for all those who have a share in governing should be clearly defined. It gives confidence and avoids occasions of friction. There must, I think, be a considerable amount of give and take. One is wise to bear always in mind that one is a servant of the public in any official position, and that the loyalty one demands of subordinates must be shown to those who have the ultimate responsibility for the institution over which one is set.

It is an immense help if some Members of Council are close at hand with whom to consult in emergencies ; and in educational bodies I think it is well if there are Governors who are parents of pupils, or who have been pupils themselves in the school. The local point of view may also well be represented by a townsman.

Most important of all is the Chairman of Council, as all Headmistresses would allow. I believe myself to have been fortunate enough to work under an ideal Chairman—Sir Richard Vassar-Smith ; a man of quiet strength and determination, always bent on preventing any kind of interference with what he deemed the prerogative of the Principal, anxious to master completely any matter submitted to him, and ready to help in the solution of any problem however small. He never asked to be consulted, or attempted to control affairs until asked. Best of all, he had a sense of proportion that discriminated unerringly between the great and the small—sweeping away the latter with a word, and dealing with the former with care and caution. In meetings he could be a good listener, but he could not tolerate waste of time, and was prompt

in decision and clear in action. It was a splendid education in business affairs to serve under such a leader, and a privilege to have him as a friend.

There will always be a difference of opinion as to the right relation of Staff and Principal to the Council. To me the arrangement at Cheltenham was all that one could wish. Though not a voting member myself, I was allowed to nominate a representative, and was free to express my views, initiate business, and take an active part in all that was transacted. The Staff and the Guild of old students also have each their representative on the Council. Sometimes enthusiasm for a project makes one fail to observe dangers and difficulties that are clear to an outsider, and it is as possible to be grateful for being saved from mistakes, as for the indulgence shown in permitting and even furthering new departures, when they need a large measure of faith and hope on the part of the Council.

CHAPTER XII

EDUCATION : FORMAL, INFORMAL, AND EXPERIMENTAL

‘ Brave hearts and clean ! And yet, God guide them, young.’

TENNYSON.

CHAPTER XII

EDUCATION: FORMAL, INFORMAL, AND EXPERIMENTAL

I AM unwilling to attempt to define education. The vastness and comprehensiveness of the subject are proved by the fact that most definitions leave one dissatisfied. It is, of course, true that education is a preparation for citizenship, an equipment for life, a training for work and for leisure, but it is more. It is almost as difficult to sum up in a few words all that education includes as to define life itself. It is, in truth, the process by which we strive to attain to fullness of life. The words of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known concerning His own mission may be applied to education: 'I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.' The whole purpose of education, I take it, is more abundant life, both for the well-being of the individual and that of the world in which we live. To this end we teachers labour, that not only may latent powers have opportunity of free development, but also that they may be exercised healthily and find a field in which they may operate worthily. We need for our work the right surroundings; and the resources of the world, spiritual, mental and physical, must be available. We fail as educators unless we create a longing in the child for that which conduces

to fullness of life, and makes it more truly enjoyable, more entirely worth living.

There are two kinds of education which contribute to the development of every man and woman. One of them is guaranteed by the State, and cannot easily be escaped in a civilised country. The other is neither sufficiently recognised by the State nor by those concerned with providing educational systems and facilities, either for children or adults. The one may be called direct education, the other indirect: the one is received consciously, the other unconsciously: the one is formal, the other informal.

Direct education begins with the Junior School, if not with the Kindergarten, and probably ends with the University. After that the student may attend courses of lectures, or take up some branch of research, but organised education as an object in life and a preparation for life will have ceased.

Indirect, informal, involuntary education will, however, continue, and go with us from the cradle to the grave: and in the schemes made so elaborately for national education it is apt to be ignored, or at best underrated. The work at school cannot have its full effect unless it is supplemented by an atmosphere outside the school that is in harmony with what is taught there, and it is difficult to overestimate the help or hindrance to the teacher derived from the whole of a child's environment. How much easier is the task of explanation when there is acquaintance with the talk of cultivated people, and vocabulary is not unduly restricted: when the child is accustomed from early life to the society of books, to the companionship of beautiful pictures, and to all that feeds the love of beauty in nature, literature and art.

It is of primary importance that taste should be directed aright; that children, for instance, should be led away from the sensationalism and sentimentalism of most cinemas to the enjoyment of such a fine repertory as that of the Old Vic; that parents, so eager for their children's improvement, should understand that their own interests, talk and associations may be at least as educative, or the reverse, as the work which their boys and girls are doing at school. Parents are ambitious for their children; it would be well if they were more intellectually ambitious for themselves for their children's sake.

There is something pathetic in the longing of Labour that their children should enjoy to the full all the advantages supposed hitherto to belong exclusively to the children of the privileged classes, and in their faith in the transforming virtue of Latin and Greek, French and German, Mathematics and Science. They are convinced that all differences between themselves and the more privileged classes will disappear if only higher education is accessible and common to all, and they ignore all that goes to make indirect education.

You cannot by means of any syllabus or any course of lectures, however good, or by attendance at any secondary school or University gain that indefinable quality which is a very part of those who live in cultured surroundings. It is to some extent a heritage and is also imbibed by a child in his earliest years from being among those who have a sense of the right values in life, and from an environment in which he will hear great men appraised, art and literature discussed, and in which, as he grows older, pains will be taken by the elders to lead him to take an interest in such discussions and to express opinions of his own. I think there is a danger lest we may be doing

a wrong to the democracy, who are yearning for the things which make for the understanding and enjoyment of life, if we do not put clearly before them the fact that education is something much wider than Labour at present conceives.

We should say to the artisan : ' You are right in desiring a broad, cultural education for your son, not because it means advancement in the social scale, nor because it means power to rule, but because it means fuller life, more enjoyment of the best things within reach of man, more development of capacity. But you do not realise that education in its best sense is not a matter of curricula and syllabus, nor even of obtaining the hall-mark of a secondary school and University. It is bound up with character and traditions, inherited tastes, culture and the atmosphere in which a boy and girl live their daily life at home. It embraces much outside the school life. It is continued in the hours of leisure as much almost as in the hours of work, by parents and friends as much as by school teachers.'

But even where we may count on the home supplying much that enriches life, and reinforcing and supplementing the teaching of school, there is much that lack of time excludes from the school curriculum, and that is apt to be overlooked altogether, while certain subjects are allowed to absorb a considerable amount of attention in a girl's school career and often to no purpose, for they awaken little interest and are not pursued when school-days are over. How many weary hours are spent over music lessons and practising, and over drawing and painting, by girls who have no aptitude nor any desire to learn either.

Of late years attention seems to have been directed far more to somewhat revolutionary experiments in education than to the enrichment of formal education in such

ways as I have suggested. Such new departures have for us all the charm of novelty and of completeness. They are not merely adaptations of the existing system. We have had the Montessori Schools, the Dalton system, the Little Commonwealth of Homer Lane, the Dalcroze Eurhythmics, the Farm School of Miss Isabel Fry, and the creative and co-operative idea of education applied to the Public School by Sanderson of Oundle. All these are manifestations of the same desire—a desire for freedom that animates every class of the community, and has naturally been influential in educational schemes.

In the Montessori Schools the principle of free development and the minimum of control or direction of small children is exemplified. The Dalton system goes further; for here we find self-education and self-government in a community of older children. In the Little Commonwealth a still further step was taken in granting to children, previously guilty of law-breaking, the responsibility of law-making, and of organisation of their community. The idea of Monsieur Dalcroze is that children should by means of physical exercises to improvised musical accompaniment 'interpret freely and in an individual manner the feelings that actuate us, and group, magnify and give style to the emotions inspired by music and poetry.' And he adds: 'This gratification cannot but contribute to the raising of the instincts of the race, and the permeation of the altruistic qualities necessary for the establishment of a healthy social order.' In the Farm School the idea is practically the same as that underlying the changes effected by Sanderson at Oundle—the value for the young of serving the world around them by their activities, and of contributing to the production of those things necessary for the life of the community.

There can be no question as to the attractiveness of each one of these experiments in education, and it is impossible to judge them quite fairly until a generation has arisen educated on the new methods. But it is significant that there has already been time, but comparatively little inclination to adopt widely and wholeheartedly any of these systems. What is the reason? No doubt the promoters will assert that it is the force of tradition which keeps us in the old ruts, and that the ordinary educationist, and still more the British parent, is horribly conservative and afraid of new departures.

This may be so, but I believe that experience and conviction more than love of orthodoxy account for the hesitation in accepting the new methods, and the questionings as to their efficacy. Is such a *bouleversement* of old practices really required in order that children may, in the language of the psychologists, 'have direct contact with reality,' 'face concrete problems' and 'fulfil responsibilities to the community'? These are big phrases to apply to little people, and it may be questioned whether the tendency of many of the new schemes is not to lade children with burdens too heavy to be borne, and duties that could well be postponed.

Those of us who would support reform rather than revolution in schools would contend, first, that the gains to be derived from the new plans are overestimated, and, secondly, that many of the aims of their promoters are ours, and are being achieved in our schools in various ways. I have not merely inspected some of these 'systems,' but have had practical experience of them. They teach us much, but they also leave much to be desired. The argument so often urged in their support that children enjoy them counts for comparatively little, unless the

enjoyment is continuous and universal, and my experience shows that this is not the case. All novelty is delightful to children. Change, surprises, interruptions, excitements are a joy, but, unless there is either control from without or from within, the Montessori apparatus will become wearisome, and Eurhythmics a bore, and the young will be 'off with the old love and on with the new,' whatever it may be. Indeed, it is possible to give them their heart's desire in youth and send 'leanness withal into their souls.' Nor is it really easy for those who are older to understand the rapid changes of youth, or what directs the 'life urge,' and to determine whether it be due to hereditary instincts, or appetite, or rather, as I believe, to the fact that the child is under the influence of companions, being extraordinarily imitative at an early age. The changes of occupation in a Montessori School are due, I think, to the simple obvious desire of the child to do what it sees another doing as much as from any spirit of inquiry or other impulse. In fact, the interests of small children are inscrutable, and not to be determined by any rules. At a party arranged for our forty Kindergarten children, boys and girls, we decided on a novel plan by which there should be tables for two, and each child be allowed to choose his companion. The miniature restaurant was a charming sight, and the following somewhat surprising conversation was overheard at one table: 'No, Barbara; you must not say anything against the Irish. All Irish are not Sinn Feiners. My Nanny is Irish, and she is a beautiful Nanny.'

The way in which a small Kindergarten boy spent a free afternoon would also hardly have been expected by grown-up people. His mother had to leave him alone to amuse himself, which he did entirely to his own satis-

faction by first spending an hour at the races, and then calling on an old lady, a friend of his mother, who was an invalid. The regular lessons of the Kindergarten had not destroyed his inventiveness or crushed his altruism.

I have known numbers of girls implore to be released from Eurhythmics, and Kindergarten children far more absorbed and happily quiet over sums and musical notation than with the Montessori plans for discriminating between colours, textures and shapes. My experience of children shows me that they prefer, as we elders prefer, an ordered life and a regular interchange of work and play: nor will they be beguiled into believing work play or play work, though they will readily admit that they like both. In schools in many respects on the old lines there is no lack of keen enjoyment among the pupils. I knew a mother who, seeing her girl off one morning, wished her a happy day. 'You need never wish that,' the daughter replied, 'it is always desperately exciting.' Yet she was going to a school where silence was enforced during the greater part of the morning, and book-learning was far from being a negligible matter. It is admitted by the advocates of the new methods that discipline is essential if a child is to be released from the domination of her whims, and that at a certain stage lessons must become systematic, time be 'set aside for cultural studies,' and book knowledge, related as far as possible to life, be acquired. So, after all, book-learning and lessons cannot be dispensed with, and at best a compromise is attainable.

To my mind, the success of these new schools depends really on the driving force of the original mind that has conceived the idea and has a kind of parental solicitude in making it effective. The proof of their value is whether

they can stand alone when this driving force behind them is removed. Though many people would consider Miss Beale's methods out of date, the fact that they are still found workable is a tremendous vindication. They were founded on an intimate knowledge of human nature, and not on a psychological theory. It is not easy to be constructive, and we must all recognise that revolution often brings about reform. One cannot be too grateful to people who have the audacity to make a great and complete experiment, which stirs us up and makes us take stock, as it were. We shall never be able to pay our debt to those who, with a combination of fanaticism and the missionary spirit, have hastened progress in the various departments of life.

It is, in truth, a compromise at which we, who seem to lag behind the advance guard in experiment, are aiming. We believe in encouraging free expression and initiative, but we recognise that many qualities quite as important as creation and co-operation are fostered by ordered, systematic work under direction, and that true happiness is not dependent on the satisfaction of the child's impulses or instincts, but on her adjustment to life rather than the attempt to adjust life to herself. We are all alike bent on the cultivation of powers and faculties in the young, not on the acquisition of knowledge as an end in itself. It is to be regarded only as a means to more abundant life.

We recognise youth as a stage of preparation for life, rather than the time for its full activities. We want to lay a sure foundation, to cultivate in the child a high standard of efficiency; and in order to achieve this we aim at awakening aspiration and developing the power to think as well as to do. We do not want to treat children as little men and women, taking a part in the world's

work before they are ready, though we welcome those opportunities of helping others which occur naturally in a child's life.

With this ideal in view it matters little what is learnt, but far more how it is learnt. We desire that children should enjoy what they learn; but enjoyment does not depend on the subject learnt. It does depend on the child's exercise of its invention, perception, memory and intelligence; and the will to exercise these depends largely on the teacher's skill and enjoyment in teaching. There is nothing more infectious than enthusiasm. Children will sit happily for over an hour listening to a talk about animal drawing, with illustrations, just because the lecturer is enjoying it; though they have no pencils and are not creating. There is the potential artist, doubtless, awake within each of them. So, too, with history or poetry. The stories of crusaders, the legal aspects of trade disputes, the character of Portia or Desdemona, hold the young entranced, for within them is the potential knight, lawyer, politician and heroine; and so these things are related to life, though not as yet to their experience, for they are learning from the life and experience of others much that may prove of real value to them in the conduct of their own lives.

The competent teacher, not bent on informing her pupils, but on being informed by them at every step of the way, is teaching them, without their knowing it, many things at one and the same time—the art of expression, the art of criticism, new facts and the power of fitting them on to old knowledge, and, not least important, the realisation of those branches of learning which open out to pupils fresh vistas, and those which to them present no living interest and awaken no response.

The happiness of the young in their work consists largely in the breaking of new ground, and in the feeling that they are gaining a grip upon the subject studied and are making definite progress. Their estimate of their teacher will depend upon this far more than upon the mere attractiveness of either the subject or the teaching. To have grasped a problem in mathematics, to have produced the most simple poem or musical composition, even to have written a criticism, unaided by books, which has brought out powers of analysis and perception, is no less a pleasure than to have made a stool or chair, to have learnt the art of butter-making, or to have fashioned an agricultural implement. It is indeed dangerous to let the child think that the tangible article of domestic use is of first importance and that it alone is of service to the community, while the higher intellectual efforts are selfish and useless. Is there not a real danger that values may be misplaced and wrong standards accepted? It would surely be disastrous if children, above all others, were encouraged to take too narrow and utilitarian a view of their work. It is very easy to exaggerate the importance of the concrete, and to underestimate the child's power of grasping and the teacher's power of presenting the abstract.

The training of the average elementary school has been contrasted with that given to Boy Scouts. I am, however, convinced that the joy of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides would not be so great in the activities into which they throw themselves with so much zest, if they did not have their ordinary lessons in school, and if these interests of their leisure time were the whole business of life, whereas on the contrary they provide constant variety and excitement. The charm is in part the charm of freshness, the open air,

comradeship, the attainment of many badges, and the possession of a uniform. In girls' schools, where the study of domestic science is almost universal, we do not find it more popular than other subjects, although it has a very obvious relation to life, and has unfortunately only too much to do at the moment with the 'living experience of the learners.' In fact, it is curious to hear girls declare that having done domestic science as a part of their school work has made them unwilling to undertake house-keeping when they go home. They want to explore new fields. Some years ago I introduced horticulture into the school course, but found it quite unpopular among children. They regarded it neither as true work nor as play, and showed little interest in the growth of flowers or vegetables, which to many of their elders is so absorbing and delightful. Practical mathematics and the Direct Method in languages were experiments I also tried; but although their novelty appealed to the children at first, they did not prove really popular.

An effort is being made to introduce the teaching of hygiene into schools, and the knowledge is undoubtedly needed, but surely it is a question whether this cannot be better inculcated by parents or by Post School courses than in formal lessons in school. All over the country now we have Women's Institutes full of vigour and in a very teachable state of mind, and it seems as though time might be well spent in studying such subjects as the care of health; and it is for the parent to pass on the knowledge to the child.

One wishes, too, that parents and teachers could combine in a crusade against the rapid deterioration of the English language going on at present. I have often discovered in a class of small children a real love of the beauty of

words, and a pleasure in hearing good poetry or prose, which they have not analysed but of which they are nevertheless conscious. But the fashion of the day is too strong for them, and they adopt a slang vocabulary that is so constantly in use that all power of expression of a subtle kind is entirely lost. The correction of essays and lessons in grammar do little to alter this. It needs the efforts of those at home, as well as the study of the finest literary models at school, to improve this state of affairs.

Do not let it be imagined that in criticising the new methods I think for one moment that all is perfect in our existing schools. The weakness in much of the education of to-day lies, it seems to me, in the over-great importance attached to the subjects studied, the ground covered, the comprehensiveness of the school programme. We are well aware that examinations still exercise too great an influence on the choice of subjects and the manner in which they are treated, and it would be well if we could be ruthless in removing stereotyped and 'dead' subjects, and recognise that the forces for good outside the school should be utilised more largely to supplement and enrich the life within, both for pupils and Staff. We might eliminate from our secondary education much that can be better supplied informally. It is beginning to be questioned already whether, either in painting or music, it is not more profitable to learn to appreciate and know the great masters, than to possess some slight manipulative skill. It often appals one to think of the amount of money spent by poor parents on music and painting lessons for girls who have long ago proved to have no special gift for either; while to listen intelligently to a good concert, or to have developed some critical power in going round a picture gallery, is to have added in no small measure to the joy

of life, and to have laid the foundations of a true art education, which will be continued in a hundred different and unexpected ways. We of an earlier generation deplore the fact that we are in the condition of the Royal Academy visitor who knows what she likes but not why she likes it, and wish that we could learn something of the Theory of Music and of Musical Appreciation, or of History of Art and Principles of Decoration.

For some strange reason most young people, who have not been taught otherwise, like the wrong things in decoration, whether of themselves in dress or of their homes in furniture. The joy of accumulating possessions results in a motley collection of oddments and so-called ornaments crowding every corner. There is no method in the madness which determines the coverings, hangings, wallpapers and carpets. But if once the beauty of line and form is pointed out, the value of clear spaces, the objections to a multiplicity of patterns in one room, and generally speaking the beauty of simplicity, it does not take very long to effect a conversion, though there may be a lingering clinging to hideous possessions with old associations.

I may seem to magnify the importance of these things, but when it is remembered that nearly every woman in course of time furnishes either her own house or her rooms as a professional woman, or may even have the chief decision in decorating an institution, a general change in outlook on this subject might mean an untold improvement in the diffusion of higher standards of taste. Occasional lectures on literature, art and science give a splendid stimulus to all the members of a school, and it means much to the young to see and hear the great men of their own period speak on their crafts. They get a



Photo. "Daily Graphic."

CHELTEMHAM LADIES' COLLEGE, CHILDREN PAINTING FRESCOS.

salutary sense of their own immaturity and an idea of true values. Our list of lecturers at the College included among others Sir George Parkin, Sir Henry Newbolt, Mr. Walter de la Mare, Mr. John Drinkwater, Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Walter Sickert, Professor Rothenstein, Mr. Hugh Walpole, Professor de Selincourt ; and to hear them meant inspiration as well as information, and added to those memorable moments in life when one takes a definite step forward in intellectual apprehension.

I would also point out that in the occupations of the child outside the ordinary school work powers may be tested which have no opportunity of exercise in school hours, and that much useful and creative work may be achieved. In their employment of leisure the 'life urge' of children can be discovered, and a contact with reality established. I propose to give one or two examples, which could probably be multiplied indefinitely from the experience of different schools.

The girls at Cheltenham often showed considerable talent and invention in their independent activities, and they were always encouraged to be useful. They arranged their House dramatic performances entirely by themselves, painting scenery and making dresses when necessary ; all the curtains at the swimming-bath were stencilled by the girls ; and the Junior School decorated their corridor at College with delightful frescoes. When a Christmas party of three hundred was organised for the Household Staff of the College, and the maids belonging to the boarding-houses and their friends, the girls prepared the tables, arranged the flowers, waited on the guests, and finally washed up. The greatest care was taken that all the arrangements should be as correct as for the most formal banquet, and no detail escaped the observation

of the guests. The napkins in the glasses delighted them. 'No expense has been spared,' said one of the charwomen. They thought the students waited beautifully, and they did not like to refuse second helpings because they were afraid they might hurt their feelings. 'Nothing,' said one cook, 'could have been more social, I'm sure, and we shall never forget it.' Certainly no party ever gave more pleasure to those entertaining and entertained, and it was hard to say which was which.

One year we organised a kind of College Eisteddfod, in which the girls showed how they liked best to occupy their free time. The work was both creative and executive, showing what they could produce unaided in literature, art, music, crafts, oratory, domestic arts, and included also demonstrations in tennis, swimming and riding. We had expected about seven hundred entries, but there were fifteen hundred. No prizes were given, only scarves of honour, but the girls flung themselves into their work with keenness and fearlessness, and there was at least nothing dull or conventional in their efforts. The fact that such critics as Mr. Yeats, Lady Richmond Ritchie and Sir Hugh Allen pronounced the work to be of high excellence testified to the standard of efficiency reached. Incidentally, the Eisteddfod was valuable in discovering powers in one direction or another which had been hitherto concealed, and a girl who seemed stupid enough in ordinary class-work showed, perhaps, a dexterity in some craft which gave her a new dignity.

The chief obstacle to these efforts lies in the organisation needed. However simple one hopes and believes it is going to be, it invariably entails more than has been expected, if all is to go smoothly; and in these days of economy of teaching staff, as well as of all else, there is a

danger of overworking willing helpers, if no extraordinary enterprise is permitted to interfere with the ordinary school-work. Perpetual exercise of invention is also demanded, for these efforts cannot be successfully repeated. The same is true of pageants and pastoral plays. An experiment calls forth the will to succeed, but when success has been won repetition becomes dull, and often ends in failure.

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGION IN SCHOOL LIFE

‘What is Faith?

Faith is a fire.

But how does man come by it?

Perhaps God gives it him.’

F. W. HARVEY.

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGION IN SCHOOL LIFE

THE cultivation of the life of the Spirit in a great school is to many of us the most important, delicate, and difficult task before us. We must consider the needs of the age, which change rapidly, the capacity and qualifications of the teachers, the nature and desires of the children. Our work must be largely experimental and individual, for it is as easy to hurt as to help, to create a distaste as to awaken a longing. We have our most splendid opportunity of influence, the chance of reaching the very springs of action, of calling out spiritual aspiration, of starting the child on a great quest, and buckling on armour for the finest enterprise in the world.

But it is not to be undertaken lightly or inadvisedly, for it may be questioned whether ignorance in childhood is worse than wrong teaching in its effect on after life. The mind of the child uninstructed is soil uncultivated ; the mind of the child wrongly taught is often full of weeds, hard indeed to root out. The child untaught is likely to be eager to learn, open to impressions, responsive to the beauty of spiritual ideals. The child badly taught may fail to see anything to love or admire in the life of the Spirit, and prove prejudiced and unteachable. While children may, without disastrous results, turn from mathematics or geography handled amiss by their teacher,

and never look at them again on leaving school, the adult religious life may get a serious set-back through antagonism aroused by the unwisdom of the teaching received when young.

There are, of course, very many secondary and elementary schools in which the State sets definite limitations upon the matter and method of religious instruction. As far as it goes, the work done is admirable, but undenominational religious teaching may mean little more than a history or geography lesson, and we hope for the time when a more liberal policy may prevail and the State reverse its decision. Undenominational teaching cannot seriously attract either teacher or taught. It has no shape or form ; it is indeed a nameless nothing, though many teachers have no doubt tried to give it a body ; and the fact that it has existed for so long in a large number of schools and Training Colleges, and that the University Colleges for women are for the most part on an undenominational basis, has resulted in a generation arising who are too ignorant to be capable of teaching, and too honest to be willing to teach children in schools. It seems likely that sooner or later the State will take over more schools, and instead of refusing grants to those that are denominational it might well recognise that all religious teaching, when given with conviction and sincerity, is a valuable asset—the teaching of Wesleyans, Quakers and Anglicans alike—and should receive State support ; and parents should be free to choose the religious instruction preferred, either within or without the school. For years past the undenominationalists have had it their own way ; and the Church of England, the Church of the State, has been penalised by having to provide large sums of money for Church schools and, in addition, to help to

maintain the undenominational schools through the rates. What is wanted for the spiritual life of England is a great inclusive religious policy in education. What we have is an exclusive policy, which, on the testimony of padres in the war, has produced a generation uninstructed in religious truth, though never wholly indifferent.

The following words by the present Dean of York, in a scheme for State-provided denominational schools, put the matter very clearly :

‘ The fairest policy would seem to be that there should be some sort of local option as to the religious character of the school, with proper safeguarding of the rights of minorities.’

‘ The great central issue before us is really the religious and moral welfare, not merely of little children, but of future generations of Englishmen. It is not a question of this teaching or that teaching, but it is the question whether our young men and women shall start out in life with religious associations, religious sanctions, religious ideals, or not.’

For those schools which are free from limitations in religious teaching the responsibility is the greater, but the difficulties are many and they change from decade to decade. One of the greatest is the problem of finding teachers, either trained or willing to take the subject. Many are too conscientious to undertake religious instruction without being at least as well equipped for it as for other subjects ; and some, quite apart from training, have too many doubts and difficulties to be able to speak with any assurance, or to lead even small children on a path which they have long ago abandoned. There are disadvantages in having a specialist teacher, however good. It is not well that teaching Scripture should be regarded as her ‘ job ’ ; and perpetual repetition of the same work may endanger the freshness and force of the

appeal. Here, more than in any subject, education is 'by consent' of the learner, and any mechanical work will be of little use in reaching the desired end.

There is, however, certainly no subject for which, even at the Kindergarten stage, such an eager, inquiring audience can be found, and the teaching of children up to the age of nine or ten should be pure joy. Here we have 'a little, supple thing, which can be made into a vital, spiritual thing, and nothing again will count so much for it as what happens in these its earliest years.'¹ Nothing is too marvellous for the tiny child to accept; every day is a storehouse of wonders. Nothing is too difficult for her to believe. She has not become so earth-bound that she fears to think of death, and Heaven 'lies about her in her infancy.' The unseen can be intensely real to her. The expression of love and trust is entirely natural to her. To hear little children say their prayers is to hear true prayer, loving expectant communion. They find it easy to believe in perfect Goodness, Truth and Wisdom. The ideal is to them the real. To them all things are possible. The little child wants and expects that which is perfect, and the failure to obtain it brings misery and disappointment, keen and desolating.

Our task is to teach children how to use their spiritual faculties, just as we teach them how to use their physical and intellectual powers. We want to foster the sense of the unseen, spiritual world, and to develop an understanding of how to live the spiritual life, as they learn to live, according to nature's laws, their physical life wholesomely and well.

In the first stage, the Kindergarten, the beautiful stories contained in the Parables will give the children the con-

¹ Evelyn Underhill, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of To-day*.

ception of the tenderness and love of the Unseen Friend. The Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan prove fascinating to them. I went one morning into a Bible lesson, and asked the children what was the subject. 'The wasteful boy,' cried a dozen voices, and they all clamoured to tell the story. First a boy and then a little girl gave a version of it. The main point was quite clear to both, but delightful variations in the setting of the story were introduced, and it was evident that each child was describing a home familiar to its experience. In one, the father walked in a garden and the son came to him across the fields; in the other, he was on the steps of his house under a portico, when he caught sight of the 'wasteful boy' in the dim distance. There was nothing formal or stereotyped. It was all intensely real and impressive to them.

Little children are also astonishingly responsive to atmosphere, and the beauty of their surroundings. I went the other day to a children's Eucharist in a Gloucestershire village church, where the spirit of true worship was unmistakable. It was a large congregation: a few grown-up people, but for the most part children, under no supervision or control, and ranging in age from seventeen to six. All knelt motionless and entirely absorbed. Hymns were sung softly by village children; utter silence and peace pervaded the church, but no conscious influence was being exerted to produce this atmosphere. There were no processions, no ceremonial. Nothing was provided for the children to do, but the right environment was supplied, the right spirit invoked. In years to come one could not doubt that the memory of such hours would be fruitful in the spiritual life of those children.

In religion, as in all else, informal education is quite as valuable as the formal lesson. In some churches there

is a children's corner, where they will find at hand prayers and books that are suitable provided for them. One dark winter afternoon I watched, unseen, a boy of ten slip into a church at Christmastide to kneel in silence for a moment and gaze at the figure of the Christ child lying in the manger. I do not think that very young children should be allowed to go to other than children's services. They often wish to go to church from a desire to do what their elders do, or from mere curiosity, and they find it strange and interesting enough at first to induce them to be good.

The desire of little children to do something and to create can be satisfied by what is known as expression work—the illustration of stories, the making of models of towns and boats; and such work not only gives the teacher an opportunity of making them realise the life of the East, but often reveals to her what wrong impressions they may have received in a lesson, and what gaps there have been in her teaching. The questions that children ask in Scripture lessons, which so amaze their elders, are a proof that they are alert, thoughtful, full of interest, and enjoying. It would indeed be strange if it were not so.

The Old Testament stories, even more perhaps than those of the New Testament, captivate little ones. There are the tales of adventures and great exploits—the lives of Samson and David, the escape of the Children of Israel from Egypt; and there are those which have the charm of the familiar—stories of brothers and home, Jacob and Esau, Joseph, the friendship of David and Jonathan. These stories will almost inevitably provoke a cross-examination of the teacher; and if she has not thought out the moral problems for herself, more harm than good will have been done, for the child will rightly refuse to accept standards of conduct in Old Testament characters

that are, she feels, at variance with those impressed upon her day by day. We must make it clear that we do not wish to condone the meanness of Jacob, the treachery of Jael, and the contemptible conduct of David to Uriah; but we want the children to note that in spite of these blots upon the characters of Old Testament heroes, there was the honest, persistent desire to serve God, the longing to understand the mind and will of the Divine, constant spiritual aspiration, a realisation of God in their daily life, a desire for the Divine companionship and spiritual communion. Quite early we can encourage the historical sense, and trace the growth of a more beautiful conception of God's will and nature.

Linked to the elementary lessons will be the simple religious practices of prayer and praise, and here home and school should co-operate. Far too much is left to the school in these days, and parents are apt to shift their responsibilities for their children's manners, morals, discipline and spiritual training on to the schoolmistresses. It is no wonder that they do not know their own children. It is hardly necessary to lay stress on the fact that the child must see that what she is taught to believe and practise is believed and practised by those who teach.

So far we have spoken only of the training of children up to the age of ten or eleven. Far greater difficulties are encountered in the next stage. There comes a moment in school life when interest gives way to apathy, and a child between the ages of eleven and fourteen is often torpid, unimaginative, merely acquiescent. For her

‘The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes.’¹

¹ Wordsworth, ‘The Reverie of Poor Susan.’

The practical demands of life press in on her. She has lost her belief in fairies and angels ; she is a restless, hungry, active animal, not understanding herself, and not always easy to understand. She is not conscious of any spiritual needs, and has no spiritual yearnings. The life of the world opening around her completely absorbs her. She is gaining new experiences daily, and realising her physical strength more and more ; she feels the 'wild joys of living,' and the only knowledge attractive to her is that which is related to her activities. Her world is narrowed to her immediate and visible surroundings, the world in which she acts.

It may be that she is going through a time of rapid physical growth and development, and one must beware of stimulating either her emotions or her intellect overmuch. She is no longer very responsive, but reserved and much more unapproachable. She must be allowed to 'go slow,' to mark time as it were. In her preparation work she will be reproductive, not original, and the spirit of inquiry has disappeared for the time being. She will probably gain more from school prayers and the atmosphere of worship, and from the influence of those she admires, than from set lessons. She is full of admiration for heroism and the heroic virtues, and the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels—Jesus of Nazareth who went about doing good, the Leader deserted by His followers, the Young Man tempted to use His powers for selfish ends and refusing so to do, makes a strong appeal to her. I would suggest that in this study emphasis should be laid on the tenderness and unselfishness of Jesus, on the joy that He felt and gave to others, and on the peace and serenity which were deep and strong in His nature ; and that there should be little insistence on suffering, poverty, pain and loneliness. He

was beloved of children and loved them ; they felt at home with Him. He wanted people to be happy, and was glad to go to a marriage feast. He was not indifferent to the needs of hungry men and women. It is most important that when the child feels a struggle between the higher and lower impulses she should be helped to will aright, to throw her energies into the fight on the right side, and not to lose the vision of ideal beauty and goodness which she has once seen.

It is towards the end of this period that a girl is usually confirmed, and an important landmark in her spiritual life is reached. At the outset she is sometimes prompted only by the idea that it is a convention or custom to which she had better conform, and it is not rare to find that view stated by parents in sending in their daughters' names for Confirmation ; but more often it happens that the girl who has flung herself at life with such zest has found neither life nor herself so easy to master as she imagined, and fancies that Confirmation works as a kind of charm, making all right-doing a simple thing henceforward.

It is easy to dispel these notions, but it requires much insight, time for each individual, and careful handling, if this critical time is to be used aright and work the wonders that it may. The child has emerged from the condition of spiritual inertia. She is awake and emotional, but unable to express herself, and very sensitive. She is worried over problems which we could never guess, and too shy to confess it. ' If a person dies good, but denying Christianity, what will happen to him ? ' ' Does it matter what you believe if you lead a good life ? ' ' When did God begin ? He *must* have begun.' Such are the questions asked by girls of fourteen and fifteen. It is well in these days, when youth is for the most part full of

assurance and self-confidence, that some things should be recognised by them as beyond their grasp, and we teachers should readily acknowledge to them that for us too there are mysteries beyond our intelligence, but not necessarily beyond faith and hope. Some years ago a science professor in London told me that what he noted most of all in the younger generation was the absence of any sense of awe or reverence. They needed to be convinced that there were many things beyond their grasp; they needed ideals.

It is at the time of Confirmation especially that girls realise and adopt the Christian ideal of life, and I have been more astonished than I ought to have been to see the transformation effected in them. They see new purpose and meaning in the life of the Spirit. The faith they received by tradition becomes a personal faith, held with conviction, something by which to live. They become more reliable, more conscientious in little things. One watches them breaking long-established habits, very scrupulous in telling the truth, eager to reach a high standard in work, more generous and unselfish. But these things will only be detected by one who knows. There is no priggishness or ostentation, no sense of oppressive goodness, no less gaiety than of old. It is clear, however, that there is awareness of God in their daily life. Their energies are directed by a new impulse.

At this age they dislike religious instruction taking a place among ordinary lessons, receiving marks, and subject to examination. They hold that the enforced learning of passages from the Bible is useless. These are learnt rapidly for a special lesson, and as rapidly forgotten. One girl told me that essays also were wholly unsatisfactory and only encouraged insincerity, for views were expressed

which were not honestly held, but were supposed to be correct views expected by the teacher. They were clear that they gained most from carrying on some simple form of research, and they were probably right.

During the preparation for Confirmation the need of a Chapel or Oratory is keenly felt. Girls want sometimes to escape from a throng and be alone, or only with those like-minded, and they should have somewhere as a sanctuary, a place of quiet and beauty for private prayer and thought. It is very unfortunate that while it is taken for granted that every Boys' Public School will have its chapel, there are comparatively few Girls' Schools that have either a chapel or a prayer room.

More important than any direct teaching is the atmosphere in which the young live. They are quick to feel whether there is a great corporate endeavour in the common life, a united march towards the same goal. They are conscious without words that those around them are sympathetic and engaged on the same quest of truth. In private prayer I have found that they are most helped by no complicated scheme, but by encouragement to ejaculatory, momentary prayer at any time. They need to gain confidence and to form a habit, which will easily develop into meditation at a later age. One child asked me with some diffidence whether it would be wrong to pray in a hockey match. What could be better than a prayer to play a losing game with spirit, and in all circumstances to 'play the game'?

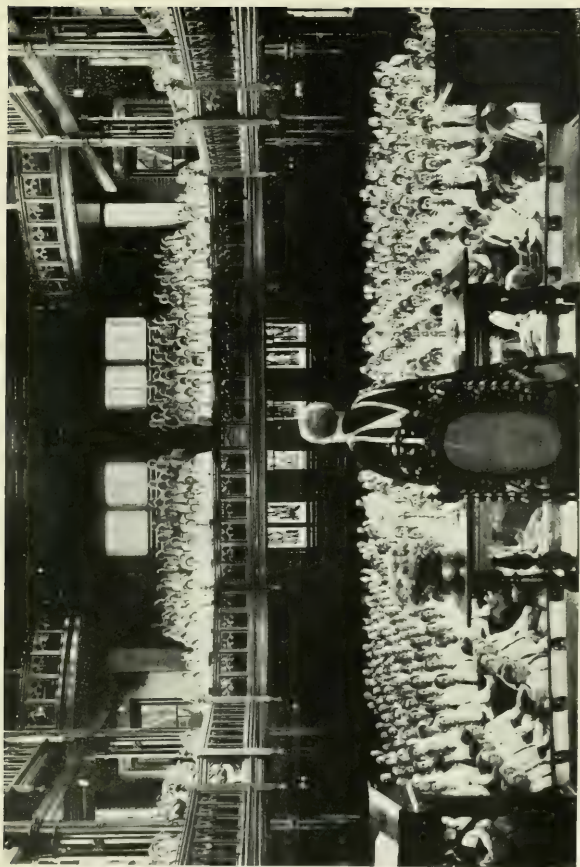
It must be felt that life is to be taken with courage, even audacity, and that difficulties exist to be surmounted, not shirked. I believe girls, like boys, rise to a somewhat austere and heroic conception of life. They are too brimful of capacity for enjoyment to be depressed. 'In

revealing the world as a world fit for heroes to live in, that is, a difficult world, religion will arouse the heroic spirit in ourselves, which is fit to live under those conditions. It will give us a part to play in life which puts our souls on their mettle at many points, but it will also give the spiritual power which stands the strain and even rejoices in it.' ¹

In our school prayers we do well to avoid monotony, and to vary the order day by day, that the attention may be kept and the children feel that they are depended upon for their share in the service. In our school organisation we should, I think, provide opportunities for devotion, and give encouragement, but never injunctions; and I have noticed that girls who have no religious aspirations or conscious needs themselves will readily grasp that it is wrong to disturb those around them, to whom worship may mean much. Special services for the enrolment of prefects, and for admission to the choir or to the guild of old students, prevent that separation of the religious from the secular life, which is all too common. In the same way, special prayers on Empire Day and the silence of Armistice Day serve as a reminder that 'the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.' When short periods of compulsory silence are arranged in the dormitories night and morning, the need of quiet spaces in a busy life is made clear to the girls; and even though some may have no inclination to spend the time in prayer, they recognise that others have something which they miss.

Girls between the ages of sixteen and eighteen are ceasing to feel and think as children, and are equal to religious study of a different character. They are accustomed to browsing in a library, and are becoming more familiar with books

¹ L. P. Jacks, *Religious Perplexities*.



Photo, "Daily Graphic."

CHELTEMHAM LADIES' COLLEGE. AFTER PRAYERS IN THE PRINCESS' HALL.

of the day, and they hear and take part in discussions. They see new points of view, and are interested and inquiring, but in some cases disturbed and distressed, and in others ready to surrender the old positions at once. They will be helped most by a clear explanation of what is meant by Inspiration, Higher Criticism, Progressive Revelation, by good lectures from able men, for whose learning they will have a respect, and by being provided with books that will call out all their intelligence. Above all, it is well to take these doubts and difficulties as very simple and natural happenings, a stage through which most people pass, and from which very many return to the faith of old, enriched and deepened. Finality and rigidity in their elders have done much to encourage loss of faith and antagonism in the young, and parents have no idea of the harm done by simply being shocked. I have known girls unable to speak frankly to their people on these subjects, because of the fear of shocking them. It is disastrous when candour is regarded as gross irreverence. The elder girl of to-day is very outspoken, but as a rule she is in earnest, and we can be as outspoken. She is not afraid to admit that she has no use for religious observances, but she wants to know, and she is very critical. It is a matter-of-fact age. Perhaps emotions were played upon so much during the war that there is a self-protective tendency. Certainly there is a horror of sentimentalism in religion so great as to produce a certain hardness, but underneath this outer crust is a longing for the ideal, a craving for beauty and tenderness, and a very real love of truth. The girl of to-day is awake to the call of the poor and oppressed, and the sense of justice and fairness, strengthened by corporate life, makes her desire to give to others the things she most prizes herself—freedom, leisure and greater

comfort ; and such a call for service as that made by the Industrial Christian Fellowship is not made in vain. In the rising generation we have splendid raw material. They understand comradeship better than docility, and they have more courage to do and endure than we had, but are wanting in the graces of the Spirit. They must be encouraged to take a wide and generous view of religious life and thought, and to see that there are many avenues which lead to the palace of truth, and that religion is but a ' part of the universal tendency of life to God.'

It is not well to burden the young with many ready-made opinions, but it is well to encourage them to give individual thought and judgment to all they read, and to avoid mechanical exercises whether of prayer or of study.

One must be on one's guard in dealing with girls against the temptation to pull up the plant to see how it is growing, and this will be most easy to do in the cases where it will be most dangerous to the life of the plant. We need to be very natural, I would almost say prosaic, in our talks ; to avoid any play on the emotions, and to be accessible but not intrusive in our dealings with them. Probably throughout school life inspiration and stimulus to right thinking and living will be got most from the tone of the school ; above all, there must be an underlying conviction throughout the community that it matters supremely how we live. I remember a past student coming to see me years ago, having just returned from Germany. I felt that in spite of a superficial gaiety all was not well with her, and at last she confessed that she was miserable, for she had entirely lost her faith. No obvious attempt had been made to destroy it, no arguments

or open attacks, but it had become evident to her that all she held dear had to those around her no relation to life or conduct.

The aim of the school should surely be to encourage life to be lived for 'the glory of God and the relief of man's estate.'



CHAPTER XIV

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

‘ What is this world if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare ? ’

‘ A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.’

W. H. DAVIES.

CHAPTER XIV

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

AS I belong to the first generation of professional women, it may not be wholly useless to sum up my experience, and in looking back it is interesting to trace the main difficulties which have had to be overcome and the things that have been most helpful. I think it is foolish to ignore the differences between men and women in their working life, differences that exist partly through temperament and partly through the inexperience of women; some of these, therefore, future generations may not have to consider.

We must recognise the fact that the work which has fallen to women in the educational world is precisely the same in its arduousness and responsibility as that which falls to men, but there is one great difference. At a comparatively early age men, as a rule, marry; and all the social duties which fall to the Head of a school or college are naturally undertaken by the wife. A man has no household cares, though he may have family anxieties. He does not have to engage his servants, or allot them their duties, or entertain visitors, or pay calls.

All these things fall to the unmarried professional woman, and they are possibly quite as distasteful to her as they would be to a man. She needs indeed a *major-domo* to order her household for her. She is in any case probably inclined to overwork, and her professional

duties easily occupy all her day, so that as a result her own comfort is too often neglected. Rather than have the trouble of a house, she lives in rooms, and thankfully lets her meals be provided for her. There is a very real danger that she will be far too Spartan in these ways, and I say this with the full consciousness that I am one of the selfish minority who are not indifferent to personal comfort. I have clung to late dinner, being sure that a large and heavy meal in the middle of the day, when one comes in from the morning's work too tired to enjoy anything, is no substitute for the leisurely meal in the evening, when the main business of the day is over. Women get more easily exhausted with mental work than with any form of bodily exercise, and they want variety in their meals as they want variety in everything. The food should be well cooked and well served, however simple.

Some years ago the Chairman of a large bank decided to institute a daily dinner for the women clerks, and took infinite trouble to provide a thoroughly good meal at a most reasonable price. To his surprise the girls continued to go out in the middle of the day, and did not seem to appreciate what was available. I suggested that probably the meal was too substantial for them after an early breakfast and a long morning's work without a break, and proposed that he should arrange for them to have the opportunity for a pause and some refreshment in the middle of the morning, and a light meal in the middle of the day. He took my advice, and the plan proved to be quite a success.

From every point of view I think that breaks at frequent intervals in the working day are desirable. I do not believe that women can stand as long hours of work as men. It is sustained effort which exhausts them. Personally

I believe that it is the need for sustained effort which prevents any but very exceptional women producing in literature or art original work of the first class. For the same reason I think that the professional woman who trains herself to have a short rest every day, when the whole tension of her work is relaxed, is very wise. It is extraordinary how quickly the habit of sleep can be cultivated, and the quarter of an hour when 'the wicked cease from troubling' can be amazingly refreshing, and enable one to tackle work with fresh zest. Twenty years ago I had occasion to go to a doctor, who asked me to give an account of my day. Somewhat shamefacedly I mentioned that I sometimes rested after lunch. At the end of my record he said, 'It must not be sometimes, but always. It is quite invaluable.' And supported by such an opinion, I lost the sense of being rather a poor creature for requiring what is usually associated only with babies.

I am inclined to think that we professional women are not so good at protecting ourselves from the onslaughts of the casual visitor, the imperious rings on the telephone and the notes that wait for an answer, as are men. Perhaps we are more imaginative and see too vividly possible consequences of neglect. I know that one is grateful to the friend who assures one that it is best to keep people waiting, or to let them come again, rather than be disturbed overmuch.

A good maid is one of the best gifts that Providence can send to any professional woman. No doubt they are becoming rare, but mercifully they still exist, and it would be difficult to say how much of the peace of one's life is due to the insistent watchfulness and ready adaptability of a maid who will see that one's clothes are ready when pressure of business necessitates the rapidity of a quick-

change artist, who will remind one of the birthdays of relations and friends, who will remember the favourite puddings of visitors, and who is never daunted by any request. I have never known my paragon fail, although I am capable of forgetting that visitors are coming to stay, or that I have asked at the last moment several people to dinner at a cottage which is six miles from the nearest town. Something is certain to be ready, and, best of all, every one will be in a good temper, for she has the art of making the whole household follow her lead, and accept with absolute naturalness the most preposterous demands. She will always have time, too, for personal attentions, and all she asks in return is a share in the family interests. She adopts my family as she adopts me, and my anxieties in illness are her own too. It is the more interesting if the political views of mistress and maid are different, and one has the pleasure while dressing for dinner of discussing the point of view of Labour, the contempt in which domestic service is held, the reason for a rise in the cost of 'costumes,' and possibly the relative importance of Sunday observances and the cooking of a special Sunday dinner.

And, next, I should like to pay my tribute to the perfect secretary. I have had many secretaries, good, bad and indifferent, and at least three surpassingly good; and as it is the profession for which every girl seems to think herself eminently suited, though she may have no natural qualifications, perhaps I may be forgiven for a somewhat long dissertation upon the subject.

There is the secretary who is but an excellent dumb waiter; who wipes all expression out of her face and intentionally becomes unintelligent, but an ever-ready implement. You may dictate a brilliant passage, or be

as nearly witty as you have imagined possible in your wildest moments, and she shows no emotion. You may make the most atrocious grammatical blunder, or split your infinitives again and again: nothing disturbs her composure. She records everything; and even if you use some nickname in a letter, wholly incomprehensible to her, she would sooner perish than ask you to spell it. Her typewriting is perfect, her punctuation faultless; but her code of a secretary's behaviour demands that she should have the qualities of a dictaphone. Such secretaries have always had their full training, and reached the highest speed in shorthand and typewriting. They are full of self-assurance, until the moment comes when the unexpected is demanded of them; then the mechanical toy breaks down. This type of secretary will, nevertheless, be always in demand, for there are many people who prefer an impersonal secretary, just as they prefer an impersonal maid. They wish the relationship to be one of pure business—not human, though humane—and they like to have those who are serving them detached and remote, sharing neither the days of strain and stress in any intimate fashion, nor the moments of absurdity and ludicrous mistakes.

Then there is the apparently absent-minded secretary, who is really making mental notes, but wishes to appear unflustered and without anxiety, and consequently makes her Principal very nervous. She will not ask, and one cannot go on reminding.

The perfect secretary, in my opinion, is not merely a secretary, but a capable, energetic woman or girl, who has gone about the world with her eyes open and picked up innumerable unconsidered trifles of miscellaneous knowledge. She has no conventions as to her work. She is

full of adventure. The more variety the better, and the more trust and confidence her Chief has in her the more she responds and the happier she is. To draft a letter instead of having it dictated is a joy, and she takes pleasure in producing in it the special turns of phrase of her employer, until it is difficult to believe that it is not one's own composition.

There are days when words fail, and clumsy sentences alone suggest themselves. At such times the perfect secretary covers one's deficiencies, gently suggests the missing term, and offers to undertake to unravel the tangled skein. She is orderly without being fussy, and delights to surprise by having at hand the precise information or document that one needs, but only dimly remembered to exist somewhere.

Above all, she prepares what is necessary for each day's engagements: the invitation card, the agenda for a meeting, the correspondence which one must master before an interview, the facts concerning a child's work, play, health, progress, which the parent will expect one to know, albeit there are eight hundred other children in the school family. And the perfect secretary will so identify herself with the interests of her commanding officer that there will be no boredom in all these details, but rather a sense of pleasure and excitement in the completeness of every part of the work she produces; and the only reward required for such devotion and watchfulness is the intimate knowledge of all that happens, which she should be entitled to share with her Chief.

It is of supreme importance that the perfect secretary should be without morbid self-consciousness or sensitiveness. We all have our moods, just as inexplicable to ourselves as they are to others, and we are most grateful

to the people who ignore them. The secretary who looks hurt, imagines you are angry with her, and wishes to know the reason why, is emphasising your unpleasantness and proving that it is perfectly obvious, which you had hoped was not the case.

A secretary must not be a jack-in-office, wanting to assert herself, patronising people whom she should serve. The perfect secretary must be a miracle of tact and discretion, knowing when to give information and when to withhold it, when to act for her Principal, when to protect her, and when to refuse to take too big a responsibility on herself. She may be of any age, but she must be malleable, and not hyper-conscientious any more than hyper-sensitive. The secretary who disregards hours of work entirely, and sits up all night to finish some statistics or letters which are not imperatively required next day, is spoiling her employer, and destroying the perception of what can be accomplished within reasonable time. Those inexperienced in typewriting must be taught how much may be expected by nightfall, and will soon learn to demand only what it is possible to produce in a given period. I have sometimes been guilty, after dealing with piles of correspondence, of finishing dictating with an exclamation of relief, 'How splendid! We have really done everything,' and have been gently reminded by a gasping secretary that her work was just beginning.

There is much for us to learn, if we would help to create a good secretary; and indeed it is possible to destroy and exhaust the most efficient by unreasonableness and inconsiderateness. To give a secretary a piece of work that requires concentration, and is far from being mechanical, and then to interrupt her perpetually with trivial demands; to leave work to the last moment which

could well have been planned weeks before—such lack of consideration is as cruel as to force a dressmaker to overdrive her workgirls by insisting on having a dress within twenty-four hours that might have been ordered the previous month.

A temptation also besets some of us to begin and then break off work that involves trouble in preparation, and if not completed at the first onslaught necessitates a repetition of that trouble. There is probably nothing so calculated to destroy the temper of a secretary and shorten her life as the waste of time consequent on waiting for signatures to important letters, pacifying indignant people who have appointments that are not kept, and finding a Chief who is not where she is supposed to be. Yet the secretary can say nothing, nor hope to reform the sinner.

There is perhaps no need to apologise for strange requests made to one's secretary, for, as I have said, the exercise of ingenuity is a pleasure, and it is only rarely that an enterprising assistant strikes. I knew one who firmly refused to write 'a nice kind letter of condolence' for her Principal to a friend whom the secretary had never seen; but if a few personal touches are supplied the secretary will produce excellent letters of congratulation or stern reproof, or business notes, all in one's best style.

If fortunate enough to have these ideal aids to professional life, there is no reason why one should be too greatly oppressed or obsessed with one's work, and I believe that professional women are only doing right when they demand a sufficient amount of help to enable them to keep fresh for their work and enjoy other interests. Those who rule over others are responsible for diffusing an atmosphere around them. We shall all agree that the

spirit of enthusiasm, eagerness and enjoyment which pervades certain places is very infectious; we all know likewise the utter depression and dullness which can creep in. It is, therefore, very important that wherever there is a drain on vitality means should be taken to recuperate as often and as rapidly as possible, and it is in the best interests of the work that this should be done.

There is nothing which kills professional women more than monotony. It is detestable to all of us, and it is noticeable that even in domestic life women rarely order two days exactly alike. They seldom do things with the meticulous regularity of men. I have noticed that a business man will for years travel by the same train, lunch in the same place, go, at the end of the day's work, with absolute punctuality to the club, and spend Saturdays on the same golf-course, usually with the same opponent. There are few women who would regard such a life with anything but horror. To them it is meat and drink to have variety. How is the professional woman to get this?

Not only should she get the wider vision with regard to her work which comes from hearing other people's points of view, but she should cultivate a multiplicity of interests which will bring freshness to her and incidentally enrich her work. This is, perhaps, specially true in all that pertains to education. To have touch of politics, art, music and literature; to be keenly interested in problems of all kinds; to travel, and to have some form of athletics, is to prevent oneself from becoming a very dull dog. Wherever we have to do with young people in these days it is most essential they should feel us to be human and not too remote from their ordinary life. The scheme for international interchange of teachers

is a recognition of this need of variety in the life of the teacher, and the stimulus to be got from new surroundings.

I have always been struck by the number of professional women who seem to share the taste of the omnibus driver who spent his rare holidays as a passenger on his bus. It is extraordinary how many educational women spend their holidays with the same comrade with whom they live in term-time, never getting the refreshment which comes from an entire change of scene and people, but carrying with them into the weeks of the vacation the atmosphere of the working life. Some have a passion during the holidays for Conferences of a learned kind, and rush to Oxford or Cambridge for a week of lectures on educational ideals, or journey to the north of Scotland or even to Canada in company with the British Association. Their work may be the better, but I imagine their lives must be shortened.

I was blessed with a friend who made my holidays both abroad and at home perfect refreshment. She was older than I, and had far greater experience and wisdom and quite as much spirit of adventure. She also had more leisure, so she made the plans and all the necessary arrangements; and this is no small matter, for if each day of one's working life is full to the brim, one often does the obvious and dull thing in holidays from sheer weariness and inability to cope with all the necessary preliminaries to a tour abroad. When one was earning money and had achieved independence, holidays could be planned which had never been imagined in an earlier generation, and climbing in Switzerland, winter sports and bicycling tours were among the exciting possibilities. Bicycling in its early days was for women a more thrilling performance than

motoring has been at any stage. The bliss of a dive down a hill with the wind behind was a sensation the mere memory of which is still thrilling.

A bicycling tour was a great adventure in the 'nineties, with the uncertainty as to accidents and resting-places; for English inns were at their worst, and my first experience was over Yorkshire moors on a hired hack which gradually fell to pieces as the days passed. But the appetite was only whetted by such things, and holiday after holiday was spent in France, Germany, Italy, and, best of all, Austria. In France, to our joy, we discovered that it was so entirely the custom to bicycle *en culotte* that there was a danger we might be hooted at and even stoned in a French village if we appeared in skirts, so my companion and I ordered correct bicycling suits from the Louvre. We dared not put them on until we had crossed the Channel, but certainly never had we been so comfortable. The fact that they did not become general in England, and soon went out of fashion in France, only shows how in women's affections beauty will always win the day over comfort.

Austria was the paradise for travellers on the open road. We crossed the Albula Pass to the Engadine. We had a never-to-be-forgotten ride from the Maloja to Martinsbruch on a perfect September morning, some sixty miles downhill with a following wind, on our first free-wheel bicycles. We went over the Brenner Pass, staying at whitewashed inns in mediæval towns, selecting the trout for our dinner from the tank outside the hotel, and paying bills so small that it makes one's mouth water to think of them. We passed through the Pustherthal to Toblach and Cortina, and went by Pieve di Cadore to Belluno and Trent, and so back again by Bozen, with its

wonderful fruit market and smart open-air restaurants, to Innsbruck and home.

And all through those holidays the thought of the working life was hardly allowed to intrude. I was helped to take an interest in some other world than the educational, to learn something about art, to discuss theology or philosophy, and to cultivate a sound taste in the wines of the country; and above all, to enjoy places and people, and all the characteristics of the countries through which we passed. One cannot be thankful enough for the friend who absolutely refuses to allow one to bound one's life by the walls of an institution, and who goes on persistently shaming one with the question, 'Have you seen that exhibition? Have you read that book? Oh, but you must,' and, furthermore, has the power of making one feel that one must.

'Camerado, I will give you my hand,
I will give you my love more precious than money.
I will give you myself before preaching or law.
Will you give me yourself, will you come travel with me,
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?'¹

Apart from the obvious gain of some sort of athletics to all working women, it is well to have a hobby or two. One of the best will be found to be collecting, it matters not what, as long as it demands specialised knowledge, and takes one, if possible, into remote corners of the country, offering an object for holiday exploring and, last but not least, giving an opportunity for that bargaining which is dear to the soul of woman. The people with small incomes enjoy this even more than those with a long purse, and the pleasure lasts for many years as one looks

¹ Walt Whitman.

over one's treasures and remembers the ridiculous price that was paid, either large or small, and all the amusing incidents connected with the purchase.

In our family, antique-furniture hunting began at a very early stage, and we used to hunt not merely in couples but in gangs, until it became necessary to establish a code of proper behaviour, and it was agreed that the member of the party who first saw and negotiated for any prize must have sole rights until her decision was made. I remember that on one occasion I had had a less fortunate day than my sisters, and somewhat discontented I wandered across the road in Peterborough to a shop where six chairs were standing in the gutter, and asked the dealer their price. He replied that they were 7s. 6d. '7s. 6d. for the six?' I said. He assented without argument, so I graciously consented to have them sent home; and they have been my dining-room chairs ever since, valued at 35s. each at least. My day's work was not so bad after all.

What an immense gain it is for the professional woman to be a member of a large family! In the first place, it is good for her to have the corners rubbed off, to learn to take chaff, to have that relentless criticism of her appearance, her tricks, her mannerisms, which comes and comes only from one's own family, and especially brothers. This is not peculiar to the days of childhood; it goes on as long as there are brothers and sisters left to one. It may be less outspoken, but it is there for the asking, and one is foolish if one does not ask from time to time. But this is not all. There is the interest claimed and given as a matter of course. One may hold a position of authority over a large number of people, but it is singularly unfortunate if one succeeds in dominating the companions and foes of nursery days. It is surely very wholesome to be taken off

any pedestal occupied professionally and be treated as a very ordinary individual. It may be that old failings remain in the family mind, and that a tendency to be slow in the uptake, to be untidy or forgetful, is freely criticised.

It has become such a commonplace for women, rich and poor, to enter on professional life, that it is hard to believe that forty years ago it was so unusual as to require some courage. We were dubbed blue-stockings, even though some of us failed in very elementary examinations. In a large family money was the chief reason for a career, not the desire for a new experience, nor even freedom, and it needed faith and foresight, and a business faculty, for parents to contemplate education as an investment for their daughters. The Victorians generally succeeded in leaving girls of the family just enough to keep the wolf from the door by leading a life of petty economies and narrow restrictions; a life confined to a dull round of household duties and routine—mendings, dustings, little tea-parties, light gardening, calls; a Cranford existence, without adventure or development of capacity.

My mother faced this life for her six daughters and determined against it. We were all to do something. Earning and spending is far more healthy for every one than saving and skimping. The former encourages an open and generous attitude of mind, the latter a mean spirit and perpetual concentration on expenditure, to the exclusion of things much better worth attention. The one gives power and possibility of expansion; the other limits resources and curbs enterprise. In addition to and before all these reasons for a working life is the health of mind and spirit consequent on an abundance of interests and the use of one's powers. Sisters packed together into a small house are apt to become cantankerous, on edge,

querulous. They see too much of each other, and can get little solitude or change ; whereas hardly any relationship is more delightful than that of sisters who have different occupations but the same past associations.

I can speak of a family comradeship which has been and is the dearest possession in life, a friendship begun in babyhood and never allowed to wane. There were many years after my parents' death in which a family home was provided as a first charge on our incomes, that there might be always a meeting-place in holiday time, a centre belonging to one and all. We suffered from a family disease known among us as *planomania*, and a family conclave sat on any new project as a matter of course. Each member was expected to introduce her friends to the family for approval, and often for adoption. The difficulties and the humour of the working life of each were sure of sympathy. One was on the Labour Commission, another a private secretary. One was Head of a horticultural college ; another was organising women's clubs. And the circle of family friends and interests was always widening. We did not know a dull moment when together, and as the years pass on a closer bond unites those of the ' sisterhood ' who still remain.

The working woman is often pitied for having home claims—the old mother, the sick sister. But the working man has the family claims of wife and children, and we are all the better, not the worse, for being prevented from becoming engrossed in the details of the business life. Women are apt to be too much concerned with the ' importance of being earnest,' and feel that they must personally supervise every detail of their work.

I am constantly asked whether girls who do not require money should take professional work. They have a

conscience about keeping out those who are dependent on work for a livelihood. But I hold it to be hard indeed if the possession of this world's goods is to prevent any one from having the joy of work; to deprive the world, it may be, of the best worker, and to condemn an ardent spirit to confine herself to voluntary service which may not offer a field that she would have chosen. Surely the right course for a woman, as for a man, is to enter the profession for which she is best fitted, paid or unpaid; to take the salary, if there is one, and use it to give a poor woman the chance of equipping herself for life, by giving a scholarship to the University or providing for her some other form of training.

For the happiness of the professional woman there is nothing more necessary than the opportunity of development in her work. It is absolutely soul-destroying to have work which never calls for initiative or experiment or adventure. Those in authority should always welcome initiative in subordinates. Even though faith in the suggested experiment may be wanting, it is well that it should be tried and prove a failure rather than that discouragement should be given to the spirit of enterprise. There are, of course, always financial limitations on experiment, but enterprise not only keeps a place young, it also keeps the individual young. Quite a number of professional women are without this spirit of adventure altogether. No doubt this is well, otherwise the world might get over-vitalised and excited. They provide an element of stability, though there is about their work an element of finality.

It is in some ways an advantage to come to a new post without much experience of the precise kind of work involved. One may make many and grievous mistakes.

but at least one does not bring prejudice and preconceived opinions to it, nor try to transplant into the fresh surroundings methods that may have suited admirably another soil. I think candidates for posts should be at some pains to discover whether they are in sympathy with the general aims and spirit of the school for which they are applying. Revolutionary changes are bad, yet one must be true to one's own convictions. It is the difficulty in which many clergy find themselves when an Evangelical is appointed to succeed an Anglo-Catholic, or vice versa. It is well to be able to build on the old foundations, rather than destroy them at the cost of much friction and sore feeling. We certainly do not want our English schools and colleges to lose their individuality and conform to one type. Uniformity is altogether foreign to the British, and if we are to preserve the character of each institution we must respect its traditions, cultivate a sensitiveness to its tone and spirit, and cherish whatever is distinctive, and gives it force and beauty, or calls out love and loyalty.

Any one who is in the position of chief administrator, responsible for human beings and their happiness as well as for the smooth working of a complicated machine, needs leisure to be able to get away from persistent claims and see her work in perspective and as a whole. If the active life leaves no time for the meditative, there will be little progress in the most essential ways. The best contributions to one's work are as a rule the outcome of hours of reflection, when there is no chance of disturbance from outside claims. The novice in administration will find herself at first chafing against perpetual interruptions in her working day, and this continues until they are accepted as part of the work and not in conflict with it, when it becomes easy to face them with serenity, and so

arrange that work which would suffer is not undertaken at the hours when it is essential to be accessible.

The Principal of a school should not, I think, be so burdened with organisation and supervision that it is impossible for her to take any part in teaching. She should have an academic standing both with Staff and pupils; and if this is to be so, she must have time for reading, and not bring to it always a tired mind at the end of a long day or have her holidays set apart for it. Even under the most favourable conditions there must be a certain amount of correspondence in the holidays, which cannot be undertaken by any one but the Principal. Apart from the gain to the school, there is the gain and refreshment to herself of studying a subject she loves, and I have often found myself less oppressed at the end of an evening's hard reading than at the beginning, though lectures took longer in preparation, and were a heavier task, than would have been the case at an earlier stage in the day.

Probably the most priceless possession in life generally, and in professional life in particular, is a strong sense of humour, with which is allied a sense of proportion. It changes the whole aspect of a day which may have been drearily monotonous, it grips one at all sorts of unexpected and often inappropriate times, it sweeps away cobwebs and kills bitterness of spirit, and, best of all, it saves us from that most disastrous self-pity, which is apt to steal in and work destruction if encouraged for a moment.

For vitality, also, we should be truly thankful. Vitality is inexplicable and incomprehensible, and its worth and power are immeasurable, whether in the ordinary routine of every day, or in the times of illness, or moments of crisis that come with surgical operations. To possess it,

is to have immense recuperative powers; it is to dance through life, to welcome hardness, to enjoy with a certain rapture. To lack it, is to feel that 'the road winds uphill all the way, yes, to the very end.' Most of us who have abundant vitality are spendthrift of it; we cannot help it. The calls upon it are countless, whether the calls of work or the demands for sympathy. It is as natural to pour it out as to breathe, and there are a hundred ways in which it is restored. Each one of us must decide her own way of recuperation. Some are revitalised by rest, some by change, some by books and solitude, some by people and talk, some by nature, some by the stir and interest of London streets. We must find our own methods, and have the courage, in the face of all advice to the contrary, to adhere to them.

CHAPTER XV

RETIREMENT

‘ If there be good in that I wrought,
Thy Hand compelled it, Master, Thine—
Where I have failed to meet Thy Thought
I know, through Thee, the blame was mine.’

RUDYARD KIPLING: *My New-Cut Ashlar*.

CHAPTER XV

RETIREMENT

IF it is often difficult to decide upon the adventure of a new type of work, under new conditions: it is no less difficult to decide when the moment has come to relinquish that which has become familiar, and to retire from professional into private life. If health gives way the matter is settled for us, or it may be that it is necessary to complete a term of years for a pension and there is practically no choice; but supposing neither of these reasons is operative, the pros and cons are many, and must be weighed carefully.

In the first place, resignation may be delayed by dissatisfaction with what is accomplished; by the sense that there is still much to be done, many mistakes to be corrected. Perhaps a good deal that in one's heart of hearts has been intended has not been carried out, or begun and not completed; and the cry of the vinedresser in the parable to the owner who threatens to cut down the fig tree in the vineyard is on one's lips: 'Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit thenceforth, well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down.' But if after ten or fifteen years of labour the results are poor, it is due to a more radical defect than time will cure. In the second place, it is very hard to determine the psychological moment for resignation, and the step is irretrievable; there is no going back. Would it not be safer to have a long holiday,

and return refreshed for another spell? There are always friends in the working life who counsel this; and however far from admirable one has seemed to one's colleagues, when the time comes for parting there are many who feel it is best to 'bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of.' There may even be a subtle fear that to resign is an admission of old age and incapacity, not very pleasant to recognise or to be recognised, and there is a disinclination for being put on the shelf and remaining there.

But I am certain that it is necessary to deal firmly with these fears and scruples, in face of the much more forcible arguments in favour of comparatively early retirement. The space of ten to fifteen years in the prime of life will suffice for any woman to make her individual contribution to the work and development of a school or college, and if she has lived eagerly, and given freely, she will be conscious that 'virtue has gone out of her,' and should be willing in the interests of the work to make way for some one else younger and more vital to contribute her share and give of her best. It is bad for any institution or community to have a tired Head, and it is clear that there should be no necessity to claim the indulgence of a Staff, and let them be considering how they can save one from justifiable claims and exhaustion.

Further, it is important that youth should not be too far removed from its rulers in point of view as well as in age, and it is not possible to comprehend fully and with real sympathy a generation very remote from our own. It is well to go before any indications show that we are no longer talking the language of the young, or understood by them. And it is the same with new ideas and new schemes in the professional life. All of us get 'set' as age

advances, though it may be that we make great efforts to conceal the fact, and are not wholly unsuccessful in doing so.

There is still another reason which may well influence us in fixing a limit to our tenure of office. We have no right, I think, to hold posts which are prizes in the profession for more than a certain period. The number of working women has increased apace, and interesting posts are not superabundant. Each age should have its opportunities and the joy of a great enterprise, and not have the passage to such barred by one who has had the venture and used her chances for better or worse.

The war left none of us as it found us. We were all very tired, and all had suffered loss. Those losses touched every place, and changed its face for us. Slowly and reluctantly, but as certainly, the conviction came to me that the work of the future must be other than the work of the past, and in December 1921 I tendered my resignation to the Council. I am going to put down my experience of retirement so far, because I believe it may relieve my mind and be of some use to others, but I do not for a moment imagine that the melancholy which now assails me is going to be permanent. With returning strength will come enjoyment, and I realise that in a year or two I may be looking back with wonder at the sentiments of to-day.

As I write, it is just nine months since my professional life came to an end after thirty-five years, and now the question is perpetually put to me, 'Well, what does it feel like to be a free woman? Are you enjoying your liberty? What are you going to do?' And all I can answer is, 'I wonder.' I do not know whether one is more conscious of a sense of relief that the endless interviews,

and decisions, and letters, and problems of one's work are at an end; or of an intolerable emptiness in life—the moorings gone, the landmarks removed, one's occupations changed in a moment. Now and again, and especially at first, one luxuriates in the absence of a time-table, and repeats again and again that delicious disregard of the clock, which is the peculiar joy of the first day of the holidays. Life is mercifully no longer parcelled out into half-hours, nor is one taking pleasure and leisure timorously, with the realisation that they must be paid for dearly in late hours. The new novel need not be put aside sternly at the most alluring episode, nor the conversation with a friend cut short just when we were in the full heat of argument, or enjoying those epigrams that only come in an atmosphere of peace and plenty, and which one savours like an eighteenth-century squire enjoying his port. It is a wonderful feeling of opulence and expansion that one experiences. This freedom is not going to stop to-day or to-morrow; no, nor even at the end of the three long months of a University vacation, the longest holiday we have ever known.

But in the very consciousness of untold wealth lies the sting. The freedom that was bound to end was far more precious than this new liberty. When the working life ceases, the holidays cease too; and I defy the 'ex-service' man or woman not to feel some regret for the days of regular, inevitable work, followed by days of legitimate play. The contrast is responsible for very much of the charm of leisure.

It is amusing to see how ready are friends and acquaintances with plans and schemes for the new conditions. 'Of course you will go abroad.' 'Of course you will live in London.' 'How glad you will be to do nothing!' 'I



Plants by Paul Joffe.

FOUR WINDS, BIRDIE.

suppose you will go into Parliament.' And one listens and waits, if one is wise, for it is the unexpected that always happens, and oneself is the most unexpected of all things.

For the first time in my life I find myself without any strong desires. I am not physically tired, at least not consciously, and I do not feel inclined for a rest cure. Yet most occupations pall in a curiously short time. I find my thoughts returning with annoying persistence to the old life and its routine. What will they be doing now? How has that new time-table succeeded? What a good plan it would be to make such and such a change, and how did I not come to think of it before? And then the realisation that it has nothing to do with me any more breaks in on my reverie, and the knowledge that those new ideas, which used to rush in on one without rhyme or reason and stay clamouring to be allowed free play, must be firmly pushed aside; for indeed an iron safety shutter has descended between me and that drama in which I had so absorbing a part, and I neither see nor hear what is taking place on the stage. It is so strange as to be almost ludicrous.

This all sounds very melancholy, and no recommendation to anybody to lay aside the working life, unless health or old age absolutely demands that it should be done, for I must add that no circumstances could well be more conducive to happiness than my own. I have none of the financial anxieties which too often disturb the peace of women's last years. I have as many friends as any reasonable person could desire, and no claims except such as go to make the happiness of life; and I am blest with an extremely enjoying disposition, perhaps one might say exceptionally pleasure-loving. I have many and varied interests, for my profession has never been to me the sole interest that it is to some of my colleagues.

Am I among those women who really care for power, although they are unconscious of it, and am I missing the crowd of subordinates, the dictation of orders and the joys of authority? This may be so without my knowing it, but I am honestly not conscious of it. On the other hand, I confess it is more than difficult to become accustomed to not being needed. I suppose that somewhere in most women exists a maternal instinct which responds to the sense of dependence of others upon them, and perhaps I am experiencing what is akin to the desolate feeling of a mother when one after another of her children find homes for themselves, and new counsellors and comforters.

Then again, there must inevitably be a shock consequent on the abruptness and completeness of the change. The full routine must be maintained up to the moment of handing over work. There can be no gradual slackening, nothing to suggest that the end is coming. It is of paramount importance that the office work should continue unbroken; that those over whom one rules should pass into the new hands without any confusion or upheaval. And so, as one shuts the door on the old life, a complete and absolute silence descends upon one, and it must be so. It is not wise even to make inquiries, and the hunger must remain unappeased. The silence is something like the silence of death; and, as with those we have lost, there are so many little absurd things that one longs to hear, things that one would be ashamed to ask, or give any one the trouble of answering.

Of course, nothing of this sort has happened, or could happen, in the past, when the interests of the old life were blotted out by the interests of a new appointment; when there was something waiting to claim all one's energies, and supplying a new field for enterprise ready

made. Here, I believe, we touch the root of the matter. Now there is the whole wide world before one, but where is the sense of adventure which it excited in early days? Perhaps it is that the spirit is willing, but the flesh weak, and that weariness is responsible for the want of exhilaration in facing new opportunities.

The appetite for new sights and sounds, new places, yes, and new friends, may return. One feels old for the first time, partly because one has lost the companionship of youth, the laughter, the clamour, the eagerness of children all around one, with their certainty that the world is a very good place to be in, and their determination that old age and middle age, together with human beings of their own period, shall be desperately interested in their doings. That is one of the most charming features of the new age. Children do not realise any great gulf existing between them and their elders, so long as it is not emphasised on the part of the elders. They are clear, with a sublime arrogance, that the world is for them; but we are welcomed if we will enjoy it, discuss it, criticise it with them as equals, and not in a spirit of condescension. We may be the comrades of boys and girls alike, but we may not be their mentors. They plunge into action with dire results, and need an enormous amount of sympathy after the event, just because they are not inclined to ask for advice beforehand.

The silence all around one is very strange and oppressive, and rather ominous for the future. And yet, and yet, how badly one needed the quiet! How little leisure there was to think or to read, and how good it will be to get out of the rut; how healthy to become a woman of no importance! Already there is a subtle change in the attitude of friends and acquaintances, or does one imagine it?—a suggestion

that one is a back number, or a rather faded likeness of oneself. Here lies salvation, for if this goes on it will sting one into an indignant refutation. Something must be found to be done, some new activity. One cannot sit down meekly with folded hands for the rest of one's life ; one is not ready to adopt the bonnet and mantle. After all, there is life in the old dog yet, and it is already showing signs of reviving with the birth of a tiny new scheme dropped into one's lap by some kindly friend. The spirit of the explorer, with which the women of 1879 started their careers, dies hard, and

‘ No sooner the old hope goes to ground
Than a new one straight I shape to the self-same mark
Ever removed.’

Idealism still has its calls for us. We cannot any more traverse great tracts or high mountains. We are too tired for great exploits ; but with a consciousness of the big projects we had and the small performances of the past, we shall be content to expect less—to pick up the dropped stitches of another's work ; to create an atmosphere of peace in the midst of turmoil ; sometimes even to make sunshine in a shady place ; to help others to see life's humours, for truly the most precious gift of God is that tender gaiety of heart which saves from envy, malice and all uncharitableness, and makes cynicism in old age an impossibility.

And so for all one's working life—its human relationships, its lessons given and learnt, its days of difficulty and sheer dull toil, its stupendous mistakes and its surprising successes, its dullness and its excitements, its routine and its variety, for the popularity and unpopularity which one has known—one may indeed say *Laus Deo!*

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Printed in Great Britain by T. and A. CONSTABLE LTD.
at the University Press, Edinburgh

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